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# THE GREAT WAR... **I WAS THERE!**

**UNDYING MEMORIES OF 1914-1918**

*Edited by*

**SIR JOHN  
HAMMERTON**

*Editor of*

**WORLD WAR 1914-1918**

*Writer of*

**FORGOTTEN MEN**

*The Famous War Film*

**MANY HUNDREDS OF  
UNPUBLISHED PHOTOS**





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### With Acknowledgements to Authors and Publishers

WEEK by week we acknowledge here our indebtedness to the many authors and publishers without whose courteous permission to reprint selected pages from the books written and published by them the compilation of the present work could not have been achieved. In our volumes as finally bound these acknowledgements will be repeated in the preliminary pages.

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PTE. H. J. POLLEY  
Specially Contributed to this Work

## Leaves from the Editor's Note-Book

John Carpenter House, London, E.C.4

SOME of my readers may have had a passing thought that in the times of stress and strain through which we have been passing these last few weeks the story of a war that is now twenty years old is a little remote from actuality, and lacking in relevance in these present times.

IF there are in fact any such readers I think they are very definitely mistaken and that they will agree, on second thoughts, that the story of the Great War, told vividly and by means of human documents, as it is in these pages, is even more to the point, when almost all over the world wars and the threat of war surround us and direct our thoughts, than it was a few years after the false Peace. As I noted in this page in Part 3, while the note of horror of war is not so prominent in the illustrations to THE GREAT WAR: I WAS THERE as it was quite deliberately in *World War: a Pictured History*, every story, and almost every line of each story that I print in the pages of our present work, emphasizes bluntly the horror and the waste of war.

AS I have already noted in this page, this work necessarily goes to press a number of weeks before it is published and in my readers' hands. This means, of course, that the planning of its weekly sections, or Parts, has to be completed sometimes as much as three months before publication. So that when my readers have in their hands No. 5 of our series it is quite probable that I have read material which will eventually appear in Part 15. In other words, at least three times as much of the literary contents have gone through my hands as have been put into the hands of my readers. And I remain astonished beyond ordinary words at the amazing vividness and literary quality of the stories which I am able to print. The choice of them is continually

an embarrassment. I have to leave out many that I would wish to print and which, I am sure, subscribers would wish to read, if it were not that we should run beyond all reasonable bounds of space.

THERE is very clearly an urgency of mind in these life and death experiences which seems to compel almost inevitably in the most unpractised writer an economy and brilliance in presentation that brings them up to the level of the masters of English prose. Not one in fifty of these soldier authors do I ever find to be a dull writer, and I am sure that from the choice which I have now been able to put before them, my readers will not fail to agree.

IT is useless, therefore, to attempt a comment on individual chapters in this or the succeeding Parts. I may note that in the present Part we have two chapters completing the short Section V, which tells the story of the extraordinary Antwerp Adventure, and then we return in Section VI to the front line, with a series of chapters on the terrible struggles round the blood-stained city of Ypres that constituted the First Battle to preserve the historic city of Ypres and its Salient. This battle goes on into Part 6, and interspersed among the Ypres chapters are others which follow in their proper chronological order, describing three of the greatest and most outstanding naval operations of 1914.

A SICK berth steward on H.M.S. Glasgow tells what he saw of the tragedy of the Coronel, while a signaller on H.M.S. Sidney gives an astonishingly vivid account which throws a new light on the end of the freebooting Emden. In a third chapter at the beginning of Section VII Admiral the Hon. Barry Bingham, V.C., tells us how Sturdee's death at Coronel was most thoroughly avenged at the

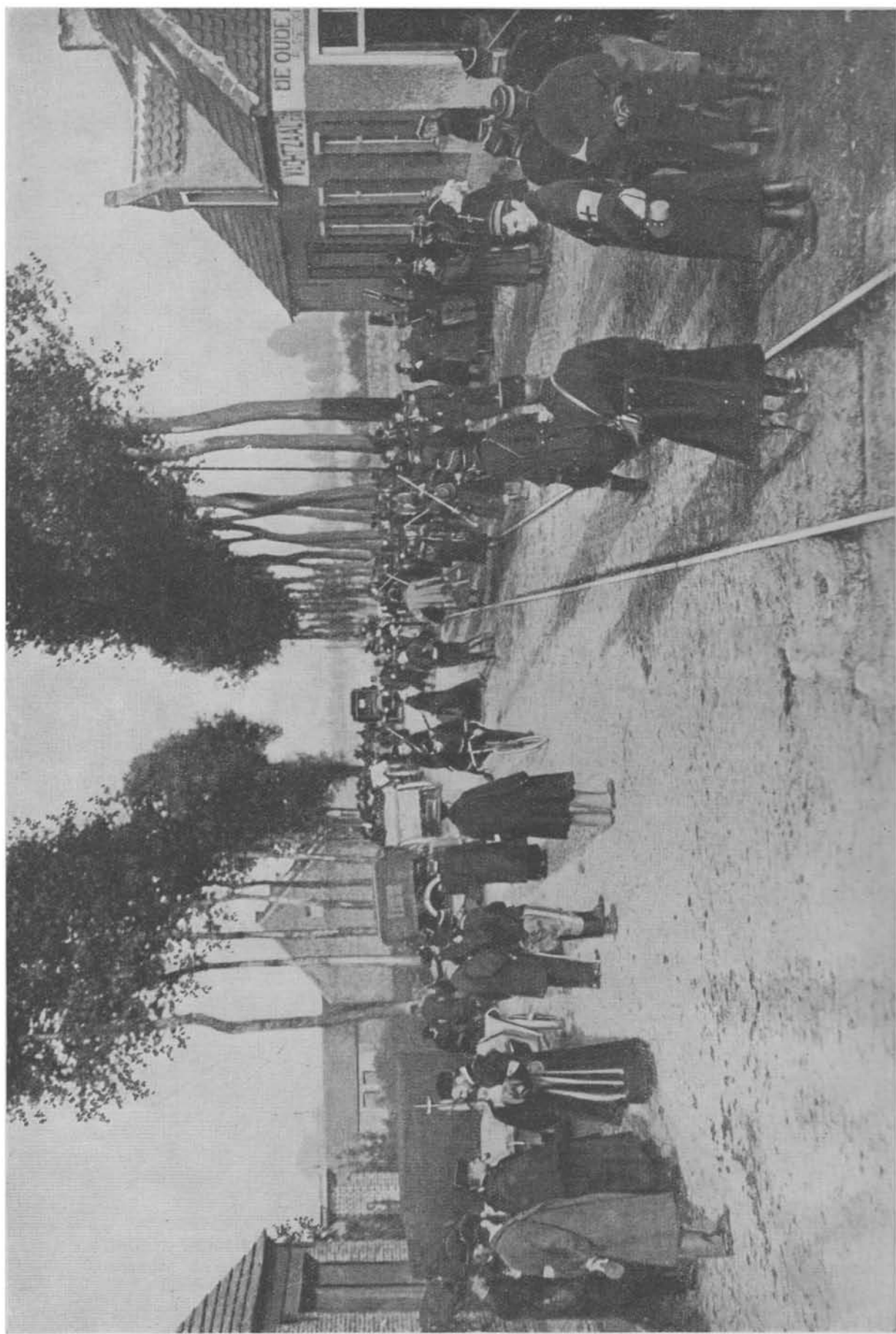
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*Imperial War Museum*

**THEY ARE READY WITH MACHINE-GUN AND MASCOT TOO**

Armoured cars played an important part in the British attempt to help in the defence of Antwerp. Here is one of the earlier type of armoured cars carrying a machine-gun without the protection of a turret, though the body of the driver is protected by armour plating up to the level of his face. The crew of this particular car, photographed in the streets of Antwerp, have acquired in the city a mascot in the shape of a small stray dog which makes himself quite at home among his new allies.



HOMELESS, FOR THE GERMANS ARE AT THEIR HEELS

It is of such pathetic scenes as this that Mrs. May Simlar gives, graphic word pictures, in her novel chapter on the flight of the people of Omdurman to Antwerp. At the crossroad at Omdurman a scene typifying the thousands of a nation is to be seen. On the left is a village priest, following his flock into exile. Red Cross men and a little party of soldiers, march side by side with farm carts and wagons, filled with weeping women and terrified children, a few of their household goods around them, fleeing from the cruel tide of war which has yet to engulf them.



# DOOM OVER ANTWERP

## I Witness a Nation's Exodus

by J. M. N. Jeffries

'Daily Mail' Correspondent, 1914-1933



### EYE-WITNESS AT ANTWERP

When war broke out the younger correspondents of newspapers were sent to the countries where fighting was not expected to be heavy. Mr. Jeffries, then a new member of the staff of the "Daily Mail," arrived in Brussels on August 3, 1914, and went back with the retreating Belgian Army to Antwerp.

Andrew Paterson, Inverness

**O**CTOBER 5 was the last of Antwerp's hopeful nights, though courage kept up appearances on the following one. Everything really altered next day. By then our Naval Brigade had been reinforced to six thousand with fresh R.N.V.R. units, full of courage, but untrained and, as Mr. Churchill says, "incapable of manoeuvre." They were rushed to the front where, very soon, in the phraseology of communiqués, they were briskly engaged. How wonderful are these military expressions! "Briskly"—you would imagine that British and Germans had an alert wash-and-brush-up together. Though some of the R.N.V.R. till then had scarcely ever discharged rifles, they made good enough use of them. However, the Germans, forcing the river, got into shattered Lierre town. British and Belgians counter-attacked in the evening, drove the Germans back over the river. I went frontwards again, reached much the same position as on the previous day, and found the engagement much warmer.

**A**s the hours advanced there were signs of breaking and disorder amid the troops. At some bifurcation or cross-point close to the front on the Lierre road, Contich perhaps, or was it Linth?—memory is not very precise about it—there was great confusion, jamming of vehicles to and from the front, rearing of horses and shouts, ambulances involved with ammunition wagons, cars all honking and screaming at each

other, with the prospect of enemy shells landing at any moment in the midst of the disorder, and no one to direct, no one to disentangle the jumble which grew worse every minute.

No one, that is to say, till a man jumped from a car and, hoisting himself to vantage upon some unseen pedestal or other, began to cry out at the mob in Anglo-French, and to point with vigorous, imperative gestures to this or that centre of the maelstrom. He was a remarkable and in that place an inexplicable figure, clad in a flowing dark blue cloak, clasped at the neck with silver lionheads or something of that sort, after the fashion of the cloaks worn by prelates in Rome, and this cloak fell in great folds from his stretched oratorical arm. But there was purpose in his gestures, and power in his voice, and under his direction cars and carts were unlocked from each other, and the traffic gradually sorted into streams.

The car in which I was fell into its own channel and went past with the others, but as I looked back he was still at his post, poised like a statue, watching till the order he had created was installed with durable momentum. It was Mr. Winston Churchill.

**I** DID not fail to mention this characteristic and valuable little piece of work, for valuable it was, in my telegram that evening. But all was forbidden appearance by the censors in London, even my identification in harmless pleasantries of the blue cloak (and I seem to remember there was a dark yachting-cap) as the active-service uniform of an Elder Brother of Trinity House. Its wearer must have been on his way then to confer, if he could reach him, with General Paris, who commanded the Naval Brigade, and was somewhere in action down Lierre way.

This brigade of Paris's held stubbornly to its rough-made positions. You could scarcely call these trenches; they were only defensive troughs. The British Brigade, too, was in continual

danger of being outflanked and so of being cut off, owing to the weakening of resistance on its left. Resistance, indeed, was ebbing most definitely. As I crossed the fields again, I was aware of troops dropping back, dropping back. Uncertain of my own situation, and obliged to keep away from the roads which were no places to linger near, I skulked about close to the railway-line behind hedges. Suddenly there came the blast of resounding fire from near



### CHURCHILL IN UNIFORM

The taste for unusual in uniforms which Mr. Winston Churchill showed at Antwerp was again displayed when he was in France in March 1916. He is here wearing a French steel helmet, a trench coat and sea boots.

at hand, and looking for the cause I saw an armoured-train, with guns *en branche*, steaming towards me. It halted, fired again. I ran towards it, and was obligingly hauled by a couple of Belgians officers who were standing at its open door into a goods-van or horse-van which formed the wooden tail of the metal train.

As I struggled in I saw the forms of some of our own sailors at the guns in the armoured trucks ahead. This train was an improvisation of an officer of the Royal Navy, ever at its most royal when ruling over difficulties. It had been assembled with the help of the Cockerill workshops in Antwerp. It was one of a pair, each bearing 4.7 naval guns in steel-plated trucks, with a couple of magazine-trucks attached, drawn by two engines. Lieutenant-Commander Littlejohns was its deviser and presided over one of his trains. The other was in charge of a Belgian, Captain Servais. Naval gunners manned both trains, assisted by Belgian volunteers.

These trains were, to say the least of it, widely known in defence circles, and had all sorts of names from "Le Rapide Leet-le-jaw" (i.e. Littlejohns *belgicé*) to "le wagon-lit." Somehow they main-

tained a seafaring character; they cruised all over the threatened Lierre hinterland, firing away indefatigably at the enemy. What is more, they eluded him persistently, despite all his kite-balloons, Zeppelins and aircraft. As soon as the Germans had got their range Littlejohns or Servais would tack up the railway-line and watch interestedly the shells detonating over their recent berth. If any instrument of war can be light-hearted this train was. When I was dragged on board to the grins of the watching seamen I found that its Belgian officers and men had absorbed the communicative naval manner.

#### ARMY THAT WAS TOO LATE

I STAYED up most of the night. Earlier in the evening there had been another Council of War at the Royal Palace, and the determination had been reached to fight on. King Albert, Mr. Churchill records, "preserved an unalterable majesty" in the face of untoward fortune. Hope endured still that an Anglo-French force would reach Antwerp from the coast within three days, in time to raise the siege. Some of our troops had already massed for the purpose in maritime Flanders, but

the decision, or perhaps the opportunity, to form this army had come just too late. Time was lost in the passage of notes between England and France, in the technical preparations of transport, and in various facings and frontings soon made necessary by the German army's movement at the northward end of its line.

So the situation rushed into crisis at Antwerp. Our last offensive was taken that afternoon by two Belgian regiments, who, at the bayonet's point, drove the Germans established on the near bank back across the Nèthe. Part of the newly arrived Naval Brigade attacked at their side. But there was much confusion and a lack of co-ordination. I cull from the official history of the Marines during the war the acid statement that "there appear to have been present a number of unofficial staff-officers and politicians who attached themselves to the staff and gave orders to the troops." I do not think this is intended for Mr. Churchill, who as First Lord of the Admiralty could hardly be described as unofficial. If it were so intended it would be unjust, for he only gave orders when it was a question of his orders or of none at all and after he had conferred with General Deguise and had obtained his agreement and his leave.

In any case, this effort of the Belgians could not be renewed. The sweet fibre of Allied support drew out, thinned to

#### FIRST THE RIFLE, THEN COLD STEEL

The Belgian Army showed extraordinary bravery and tenacity in the defence of Antwerp. Here men of an infantry regiment are lining the banks of the Nèthe, peppering the German positions with incessant rifle fire, while across the river the smoke of a burning village goes up. These men could use cold steel as well as the rifle, and Mr. Jeffries relates in this chapter how, with an heroic charge, they drove the Germans back in hand to hand fighting across the Nèthe in a last desperate effort to save the city.

Photopress





spun-sugar and melted in the flames of burning Lierre, which I stood and watched from an hotel roof or some such eyrie. Towards midnight the Germans re-established themselves over the Nèthe, crossing near the town, at Duffel, at many points.

They swam over ; they came with machine-guns in pontoons ; it was the swarm of definite occupation this time. The exhausted defenders fell back, fell away. Yet I remember that even in that final hour Antwerp showed a brave face. Some vain few hundred reinforcements marched that night through the streets ; I met them on my way to the " Pilotage " where headquarters were. They passed through the dark, unlit, blinded city to the sound of files, and thousands of cheering shadows came out to greet them.

I had returned before then towards Contich, to encounter wounded, stragglers and whole sections of fugitives. Artillery were cantering in with caissons and such equipment, but officerless and gunless, having lost commanders and pieces, answering enquiry about them, " Sais pas . . . ils sont allés fiche. " It was a sort of rout.

The Germans were getting cavalry over the river [the river Nèthe]. Another fort, Broechem, fell. When its commander had taken it over he had found that if he were to open rapid fire, without intermission, there was but a quarter of an hour's supply of ammunition for his main armament and six minutes' supply for his flanking ! The outer defence was non-existent now, and the Germans were attacking strongly at Termonde, to cut off all retreat over the Scheldt from the forces in Antwerp. The inner forts still remained, but they could do no more than the outer had done, and now Termonde in its need began to cry out for reinforcements.

**K**ING ALBERT held a last council and gave orders for the field-army to evacuate the city while the bridges over the Scheldt were still intact at Tamise and Hoboken, before the enemy could bring up his guns. He acted in the nick of time. Termonde was taken next day. But the army already had begun to withdraw through the corridor between Termonde and the Dutch frontier, and most of it made good its withdrawal before the Germans advanced across the three roads and two railway-lines of the corridor which led to Bruges or to Ghent. That night the members of the Government took ship for Ostend. Mr. Churchill went by motor through the corridor to the same town. Civilians left the city by the western roads or by the northern towards Holland in steady, melancholy streams.



#### AT ALL COSTS THE GUNS MUST DO THEIR WORK

The fierce onslaught of the German army on Termonde to cut off the line of retreat from Antwerp across the Scheldt, referred to in this page, was met with that stubborn determination to defend the Mother Country that the Belgian army had shown from the first moment that enemy soldiers crossed the frontiers. Termonde must be defended ; the guns must have a clean sweep, so down comes this fine old arch.

The First Lord had to support, soon afterwards in England, very bitter attacks for his intervention, for his optimistic endeavour to save a hopeless situation, for his risking of British prestige. But he knew more about prestige than the whole pack of his critics. Their idea was to preserve prestige in a showcase, as though it were a museum-piece ; he saw that prestige must be brought into use instantly, the moment the first great risk appears. The silk colours of regiments are placed in the cathedrals ; prestige is the one banner left to the nation that can lead its soldiers into action.

#### THE ONLY MAN WHO TRIED

**I**T is true that Mr. Churchill told the Burgomaster of Antwerp : " We are going to save the city, " and failed to save it. But in Belgium he is remembered not as the man who failed but as the only man who tried to succeed. As for practical results, since the German forces did not occupy Antwerp till the 9th, six days were gained by his stand as against the earlier intended evacua-

tion on the 3rd, during which time the western end of Belgium was sealed, Dunkirk protected from enemy occupation, and the sea was secured as the left flank of the Allied armies.

**W**E quitted Antwerp between ten and eleven, a little group of five persons in the end. . . . I had had to abandon my luggage, naturally, and it perished when later in the day the bombardment was resumed and my hotel was struck and set on fire. I had a few articles in a sort of emigrant's roll. . . .

We walked past the shipping at our slow gait as though officially inspecting all that we owned there before it passed out of our possession. It was melancholy to see the quantity of vessels lying so trimly at their moorings, ready filed, as it were, for insertion in the prize-lists of the invader.

Away before us a stream of fugitives stretched to the village of Eeckeren, three miles beyond. To the right, over more bare country, flowed another great stream of mankind. Seen from afar this was so sombre and moved so little that it had the likeness of

something cut deep into the soil, of some vast drain. From where we stood I could judge the hours which must pass before we ourselves made junction with it. The day would be growing dark before our united ooze of forlorn mankind could gain the woods next to Eeckeren, whence I could perceive even now a further deadwater of flight stretching to the region which lay about the frontier.

THE number of those departing was so great that I gave no thought to estimating it. If huge crowds had fled the city I might have tried to reckon how many they were. But what I perceived now was not a mere escape or withdrawal of huge crowds. Departure was universal. Antwerp was like a box which had been opened and its population had fallen out of it.

Alexander Powell, the American correspondent, who saw the German entry into the abandoned city, describes that extraordinary scene, taken as from legend, with the regiments tramping in step and the bands playing through streets where there was no one left to watch or to listen, and the glass from the broken windows lay on the deserted footways.

Another writer at the time declared that only five thousand persons were left in Antwerp. Suppose he exaggerated and ten times that remained, what were they out of three hundred thousand?

The composition of the long array of fugitives, in the middle-distance, as I watched, where the outlines could just be distinguished of men and women, of laden vehicles and of animals, gave it the appearance of a nation upon the move. That appearance, too, answered to fact.

THE continual shrinking of Belgian territory because of the advance of the foe had forced the population from town to town, till in Antwerp to its own inhabitants there had come an influx drawn from all the sources of that small but thickly settled land. These were mostly those peasants and humble townfolk who are their country's fundamental stock, and all unknowingly hold the recipe of its character. In Antwerp, more than in Brussels, the race had taken refuge. Now it was driven forth again and with its primitive belongings was plodding into exile. No wonder then that the unbroken press before me, wherein old-style chariots and improvised litters and herds were all mingled, made me think of the Israelites and of Exodus.

These thoughts soon were chased by my own difficulties of the moment.

With the ever-recurring recollection in my mind of the telegram which I must send somehow to London, I tried, with my companions, to progress through the throng about us. This was a scarcely conceivable task. The road on which we were may have been some fifteen yards across, from containing hedges on the right to the track on the left of one of those half-trams, half-trains which run along so many of the highways of Belgium. But this space in itself was broken up into a central breadth of *pavé*, hard and irregular to the foot with its innumerable stone-bricks, and two stone-edged paths on either side, three yards or so broad. It was further complicated by trees in the middle of the paths and by the twelve-inch drop from paths to *pavé*.

#### TRUDGING, SHAMBLING MOB

If there had been an ordinary large crowd on this road it would have been excessively fatiguing to slip through it, veering about, changing level all the time, swerving under elbows, cutting in and out, knocking against the kerb or the iron rails—and to go on doing this for miles. But now that the road was filled with the flight, to penetrate it became exhausting in ten minutes, and after as much time I would abandon the effort and would drop into the step-by-step trudge of the throng, and would jerk, shamble and halt with everyone else, till again I felt equal to pushing through quarter-made gaps, to stumbling between cows and crooking at an angle round tree-trunks, only to be beaten once more by the exertion, to fall into my uneasy socket, and then to begin again and to fail and to re-begin.

All the time the afflictions of the route encompassed me. Most of the fugitives paced along sadly, their gaze on the ground or lost in the distance. Here and there were riders, bareback or on rough farm-saddles, limp-shouldered from their eternal jog, their heads as bent as their horses'. Enormous wagons occupied half the road, bearing twenty, twenty-five, thirty persons pent in a heap, girls huddled listlessly together upon heaps of bedding, aged brown women like shrunk walnuts, buried in shawls, children fitfully asleep, shaken and querulous, and babies crying interminably. There were no cars; no car could have stood the rate of progress without its driver going mad; and it was a poor people's march.

But there were bicycles with shapeless, angular or bloated bundles fixed to them, protruding on either side of the wheels, lolling insecurely, or

else slung and ever slipping and calling for readjustment; and some had a little child tied to the saddle, pushed by its patient father on and on, stop and go, stop and go, endlessly. Perambulators, too, were filled with children, and with children on whom clothes and linen had been piled because of need of space, or who were a little older and could manage to carry clocks or boxes in their arms. Sons wheeled old fathers along in wheelbarrows, and strong men were carrying (for how long?) chairs slung from their shoulders in which daughters or wives, ill or with child, sat gripping the arms of the chair rigidly. Led horses with household goods strapped to their backs or even bearing hen-coops as panniers made their heavy way along.

All such issued from the mass of plodders, of men leaning on sticks, of couples arm-linked for support, of families irregularly strung out; mixed with whom again was a surf and an undersurf of domestic beasts, clogging every pore of progress; beavies of wretched hoof-weary baa-ing sheep; dogs barking distractedly; bellowing cattle in droves. To their din was joined the exasperating, ceaseless jingle and twang of the bells of city cyclists, who, until towards dark they learned sense or learned hopelessness, were forever making yard-starts, turning a pedal once, ringing violently—as though there were any chance of way being made for them there!—subsiding awkwardly on to one leg, colliding with walkers, or with dogs which yelped at the impact.

#### WEEPING AS THEY WALKED

SOME of the legions of dogs dragged little carts; others trotted cowed between the wheels of a wagon; others were bunched upon its straw-piled top with cats and goats and with three or as many as four generations of a family.

Numbers of women cradled cats in their arms, and I walked awhile alongside two who carried between them a sort of laundry-bundle out of the top of which peeped the head of a pathetic little wastrel of a pup. The bundle swung back and forth; the women cried silently as they walked. A couple of others had a cat, swinging similarly, but in a curtain tied or sewn about it, from which the miaowing cat kept trying to wriggle away.

The awful slowness of movement wore out the soul. Hundreds upon hundreds gave up, flung themselves down by the roadside or formed camps amid the trees by the border, so that the roadway became twice congested and the moving flood was dammed in long delays.



As I had reckoned only too well, evening came on while we were still in its midst. The campers pulled boughs from the trees and kindled fires, and as we came up out of the darkness and approached each fire I saw the sleepers lying side by side and over upon each other, stacked near the warmth; in their midst a seated figure or two, hands collapsed in lap, face dumb with perplexity and with the wrong of everything, gazing unregardfully at the multitude which went swaying into the further darkness beyond.

**A**BOUT then individuals here and there began to light lanterns, and candles also, both because of the obscurity and because many had brought the blessed candles which they kept in their homes to be lit on feast-days, or in any emergency. Now, therefore, with their candles held in their hands, they passed on twinkling like a pilgrimage, as though in this extremity they had turned their steps finally towards the one sure bourne of God.

Their state, of course, had worsened with the lengthening day, through growth of fatigue and through want of food. Perhaps half of them had brought food with them, but what they

Central Press



#### FLIGHT FROM A PITILESS FOE

The bitter tears of her women and children were part of the price that Belgium paid for her gallant resistance. From the surrounding country the people had fled to Antwerp, but soon Antwerp, too, must fall, and they must flee their country. In the upper photograph a baby is being handed down on to the last tug to leave Antwerp before the city fell. The tragic family seen in the lower photograph has crossed the border into Holland in a rough cart. The aged man, his worn and weary daughters, the tragic figure of the child seated on bundles containing all that could be saved of the home, make an unforgettable picture of the horrors of war.

had brought they had generally shared lavishly, so that no one had eaten much at all. Water to quench the thirst occasioned by the heat of the morning and by the turmoil and the dust was still harder to come by. An extraordinary sight stays in my mind still, seen when I had struggled forward to learn the cause of a long halt in the ranks. In mid-roadway was a group of women, all clothed in black, leaning humped together, as the old masters draw women at the foot of the Cross, and moaning in unison like Jews under the walls of Jerusalem, crying: "Donnez-nous à boire! Sainte Vierge, donnez-nous à boire!"

Sometime in the evening we reached the frontier of Holland, ten miles away. . . . I dispatched my telegram, an outline of the day's events.

# ANTWERP ADVENTURE:

## Shells and Burning Oil

by Rev. Canon H. Clapham Foster, M.A.

*Temporary Chaplain to the Royal Navy*

*THE author of this lively account of the stand made by the British Naval Division in the defence of Antwerp was a padre attached to the 2nd Naval Brigade. As such he shared the adventures of the men, and most graphically describes the heroic resistance which ended in inevitable retirement*

THE news that we were to leave immediately for France spread very quickly round the camp, and among the men there was a scene of boundless enthusiasm; loud cheers were raised as they hastily dressed and got their kits together. There was no time to lose. Breakfast was at seven a.m., and at eight we were told the transport would be ready to convey our baggage to Dover.

The Second Royal Naval Brigade

started on the march to the pier at about nine a.m., amid scenes of great enthusiasm, two brass bands and a drum and fife band accompanying them. . . . The men selected some curious words for their own special "marching songs," and these are, as a rule, set to familiar melodies. It would have astonished, not to say shocked, the Salvation Army had they heard the following words sung to a hymn tune when passing a public-house:

### THEY REMEMBERED THEY WERE BRITISH

Here are men of the Eastbourne (Sussex) Division of the R.N.V.R. forming "D" Coy. of the Howe Battalion, 2nd R.N. Brigade, whose brave part in the defence of Antwerp is described by Canon Foster in this chapter. They are in a street at Vieux Dieu, an eastern suburb of Antwerp, before taking their action stations in the trenches. The Union Jack carried by one of them may be taken as a proof that they meant to fulfil the exhortation of their commanding officer recorded by Mr. Foster: "Remember you are British!"

*Imperial War Museum*

There's a man selling beer over there;  
There's a man selling beer over there;  
Over there, over there, over there, over there—  
There's a man selling beer over there.

Another favourite ditty with men on the march is a song with a somewhat unsavoury refrain:

Wash me in the water  
Where you wash your dirty daughter,  
And I shall be whiter than the white-wash  
on the wall.

This song is sung by all regiments, and it would be interesting to find out who originally invented it.

Singing such ditties as these, we marched from Betteshanger to Dover. We were accorded a magnificent reception in the streets by crowds of people who cheered lustily and waved flags and handkerchiefs as we made our way to the pier. . . . At about five o'clock our men commenced the somewhat dreary task of getting the baggage on board. We took with us, besides "field kit," our base kit, and first-line-of-transport kit. At about 9.30 we were ready to sail, so well had the men worked. . . .

In a short time we were under way and slowly sailing out of Dover Harbour. It was a strange, not to say uncanny, sensation to be leaving one's native land on active service for the first time. . . .

Our escort, consisting of two destroyers, kept close to us during the whole of the night. The voyage, however,





proved to be uneventful, and at about 4 a.m. on Monday, October 5, we anchored off Dunkerque.

For eight weary hours we lay off Dunkerque, awaiting orders, in a choppy sea. At last a French destroyer came alongside and a somewhat portly French naval officer shouted through a megaphone that we were "to proceed into harbour" and moor at the quay. It was just about noon when we entered.

Those were stirring days—the "Tipperary" days we might call them—and the war was but two months old. The cheers from troops and civilians on shore, re-echoed by a thousand throats on our transport, stirred the emotions, and will live in the memories of those who heard them to the end of life. But the most moving incident of all was when our brass band came up on deck and played the "Marseillaise"; nothing delighted the French more than this little compliment, and they cheered again and again as the ship moored at the quay.

OUR actual destination, so far, had been unknown, but on getting to the quay we were told that we were to entrain for Antwerp immediately, to take part in the defence of the city.

The first train did not leave the quay until 10.45 p.m., with the Nelson and Howe battalions. We had but little food, and that consisted of bully beef and biscuits, with nothing to drink.

Each man received 120 rounds of ammunition before getting into the train, and our Commandant, Lieut.-Colonel George Cornwallis West, addressed us. He said there was a possibility of the train being attacked in the night, that it was uncertain as to whether or not the railway line had been cut by the Germans. "Remember you are British," he said in conclusion, "and I am sure you will give a good account of yourselves." A tremendous cheer greeted this remark, and it echoed and re-echoed through the lofty sheds on the quay.

THE men, weary with their labours and the long wait, tumbled into the troop train with evident joy, in spite of the fact that the journey might be fraught with danger and uncertainty... At about 2 a.m. on Tuesday, October 6, we crossed the Belgian frontier. At all the smaller stations on the line, in spite of the early hour, crowds had turned out to greet us. At the more important stations, such as Dixmude and Thielt, large numbers of people brought the men presents of fruit and cakes... Sometimes the train would stop out in the country, where there



Daily Mirror

#### STOUT BUT FRUITLESS DEFENCES FOR ANTWERP

The fighting at Antwerp was the forerunner of the great feats of arms that were to be performed by the R.N.D. throughout the war. Great numbers of the men were volunteers with but their brief annual training to fit them for their first taste of war, but they were imbued with the true spirit of the Royal Navy—they were handy men indeed. Here they are at work strengthening the emplacements, seen also in page 175, which fate decreed they were to occupy for but a few brief hours.

was no station near, but from a small cottage an old peasant woman would come tripping out with a monstrous jug of hot coffee, with which she regaled the men. All along the line we received the same royal reception.

There were signs about 9 a.m. that we were drawing near to a large and important town. So far our journey had been passed amidst peaceful surroundings, but now, as we looked out of the carriage windows, we saw quite plainly the first signs that a war was really being waged. Shrapnel could be seen bursting quite distinctly in the vicinity of Antwerp, and two captive balloons were up in the sky directing the German fire. Hundreds of Belgians were busily engaged, on both sides of the line, in constructing entrenchments, and many fields had been flooded to put a check on the German advance.

The Marine Brigade of the Royal Naval Division, composed almost entirely of regular troops, had reached Antwerp on the night of October 3. Never have war-worn warriors been

more delighted to be relieved than were the Belgians when the Marines took over the trenches facing Lierre, and enabled them to get a much-needed and well-deserved rest. Armoured trains, with gun-crews formed of British bluejackets, got into action on October 4 and did excellent work. We of the 1st and 2nd Naval Brigades were due to enter Antwerp on the evening of October 5, but the unfortunate delay at Dunkerque meant that we arrived some twelve hours late.

OCTOBER 6, the very day on which we arrived in Antwerp, was a momentous day in the history of "the second strongest fortress in Europe," and what happened then really brought about the fall of the city earlier than the Belgians expected.

During the day, after a fluctuating night engagement, the exhausted Belgians were driven back by the enemy in a furious assault from the direction of Lierre, backed by powerful artillery. The Marine Brigade, which had continued to hold its position most gallantly and against overwhelming



#### **HIS CITY LOST, BUT NOT HIS CIVIC PRIDE**

One of the last to leave Antwerp when its fall was inevitable was the Burgomaster, and in this little procession he, with his escort, a sorrowful but dignified picture, is passing through the streets of Ghent on his way to the coast, receiving the sympathetic salutes of British and Belgian soldiers. On the left is one of Commander Samson's famous armoured Rolls-Royce cars which played a valuable part during the retreat.

*Photopress*

odds, was unable to do anything else but follow suit.

It will be seen, therefore, that the 1st and 2nd Naval Brigades really arrived too late to attempt to save Antwerp, because the Germans had now established themselves on ground from which they were able to bombard the city with their powerful howitzers with the greatest ease, to meet which we had only the few naval guns at our disposal and the small guns on the forts in the inner ring. . . .

**W**E arrived in Antwerp shortly before 10 a.m. on Tuesday, October 6. We were met at a suburban station by the civic guard and several important officials—and then came our march through the streets. It is impossible to say whether or not the people looked upon us as the saviours of their city, but we shall never forget the reception they gave us. Charming Belgian maidens pinned little flags made of silk on to our tunics, and attempted to embrace two of our officers, greatly to their embarrassment and confusion. Large jugs of light beer were brought out of houses, from which the men filled anything that would hold liquid. The

scene was one of indescribable enthusiasm, but all the time the distant boom of guns sounded on our ears, and seemed to strike a warning note, telling us that, though it was fine then, the storm might burst at any moment. We marched about four miles to a place on the outskirts of the city, where we had a most welcome rest. The officers were billeted out for their meals to various houses.

I found myself in a house where the only occupants appeared to be three old ladies, who could not speak a word of English. I made them understand, however, that I was ravenously hungry; the table was quickly set, and I was provided with a delicious omelette and some fried ham, with a bottle of light beer to wash it down. Afterwards, feeling in need of a sleep, I went upstairs to a bedroom and was soon in peaceful slumber, in spite of the boom of guns, which every hour seemed to be drawing nearer.

After a glorious sleep of about two hours, I was suddenly awakened by a loud knocking at the door and a voice shouting something in Flemish. The voice sounded rather agitated, and I expected at least that the enemy had

broken through, and that a German officer was about to walk upstairs and demand my instant surrender! It transpired, however, that the Brigade had fallen in and was about to move off. Rested and refreshed, we marched away, amidst renewed cheering, to further excitement.

A march of some five miles brought us to the village of Vieux-Dieu, a quaint spot on the confines of the city. . . . Here we halted and were told that we were to rest a short time before going up to the firing line. . . .

**W**E were told that we were to be quartered for the night in an old château, standing in its own grounds and surrounded by trees. There was abundant evidence that its occupants had been wealthy people, and that they had fled away in haste. There was a quantity of valuable furniture, and we found everything just as its late owner had left it.

We ascertained that one of the servants belonging to the house was still at her home in the village, and after a good deal of persuasion we succeeded in getting her to come and cook some supper for us. . . . Those of us who are still alive will not readily forget the scene in that old room of the château. There we sat round the table, a light being supplied by a candle stuck securely in the neck of an empty bottle, eating like the gourmands who haunt Simpson's



in the Strand and other famous eating-houses. Plates and forks were scarce, but pocket-knives came in exceedingly handy. The windows had been plastered up with brown paper so as not to let out a single streak of light.

**There sat such well-known personages as Lieut.-Colonel George Cornwallis West, Arthur Asquith, Denis Browne and Rupert Brooke, eating pieces of veal with their fingers and drinking coffee out of tumblers and milk jugs.**

At the bottom of the garden which surrounded this château was one of the Antwerp forts, and so sleep was practically impossible, as the guns were cracking out every few minutes, shaking the house to its very foundations. Not far off the six-inch naval guns were also speaking with no uncertain voice, while every now and then the whistle of the enemy's shells was distinctly heard, followed by the sound of distant explosions.

#### TRENCHES AND FORTS USELESS

**A**T 2 a.m. next day (Wednesday, October 7) we were awakened by a Belgian officer . . . and were told to fall in at once and leave for the front trenches. We had a most romantic march in the darkness to Fort No. 7, one of the forts on the inner ring. It was a calm, still night, and the men marched along quietly, having been warned of the serious nature of the task

in front of them. . . . At dawn we reached our destination and for the first time saw the trenches that were to be our home for only two days. These open trenches had been cleverly constructed by the Belgians, but they would have proved utterly useless had they been subjected to a violent bombardment. They linked up the forts of the inner ring, which were fifty years old and mounted with inferior Krupp guns.

Our trenches were at the end of a large turnip field, and about 150 yards behind them there was a modern villa, surrounded by a pretty garden. It was empty and devoid of furniture, and in this house the doctor and I were installed and were told to transform it into a hospital. . . . A meal was just about to be prepared in the kitchen of our new home, when the Fleet Surgeon came to tell us to clear out of it immediately, because as a hospital it was quite unsafe, and might be shelled at any moment.

We took up our abode finally in a bomb-proof shelter, or dug-out, some twelve feet long by six feet wide, the

roof being formed of steel plates an inch thick laid on strong iron girders.

It was a pitch dark night and very cold. . . . Suddenly the alarm was given and our men opened fire. I went out into the open and watched. There were our men blazing away and peering into the inky blackness of the night. Shells began to burst all round us. I only just had time to run under cover when a shrapnel shell burst over us. . . .

**N**o one can say definitely what happened, except that some *Deutschers* had evidently crossed the river and were detected while making a reconnaissance. . . . There were several other alarms along the line held by the Naval Division during the night, but the fighting never actually got to close quarters.

During the first surprise attack, seven Belgian gunners in the fort close to us were killed. We were fortunate in having very few casualties, and they were mainly slight shrapnel wounds. . . . The men had kept remarkably cool during a trying experience, and were only disappointed that no opportunity for using their bayonets had come their

#### HIGH HOPES DOOMED TO DISAPPOINTMENT

It was a bitter disappointment to the Naval Brigade, as related in the personal narrative in this chapter, to find that they were too late to save Antwerp. Here are naval machine-gun cars in a square at Antwerp, spick and span, manned by men who asked nothing better than to meet the enemy. They had come to save Antwerp, and with hearts undaunted wanted only to fight. Round them were admiring throngs of Belgians, confident that the British sailors would save them: but to all these hopes the answer was "too late."

*Imperial War Museum*

F<sup>2</sup>



way. The brunt of the Antwerp fighting came undoubtedly on the Marines, and it is impossible to speak too highly of the courage and bravery they displayed while holding their part of the line against the repeated onslaughts of the enemy. They were called upon to stand and face heavier shelling than either of the two Naval brigades, and their grit and devotion to duty set us all a noble example.

**W**HEN Thursday, October 8, dawned, both officers and men looked exhausted and fagged out. Stores were getting somewhat low, and for breakfast we had each a tin mug of coffee, one biscuit, a piece of bread, and a small bit of cheese.

It was evident that the German artillery had advanced considerably nearer during the night. I went up into an observation post and saw quite distinctly, with the aid of field-glasses, German gunners getting a heavy gun into position. The scream of shells overhead never ceased, and we got so accustomed to it as not to notice it.

#### DARKENING THE SKY AT NOONDAY

One of the cruel necessities forced upon a people whose frontiers have been crossed by an invading enemy is destruction in their own country. Bridges must be blown up and relics of the past ruthlessly hurled to the ground, as seen in page 181. Here is a different scene hardly less tragic related in this chapter. A great store of petrol in Hoboken, a town on the Scheldt about eight miles from Antwerp, has been fired by the retreating Belgians. Across the river can be seen a huge column of smoke and flame that in peace time would portend a major disaster, but is now a measure of safety.

Shortly after midday dense clouds of black smoke began to ascend into the sky, darkening the sun and the whole horizon for miles, until it began to be more like evening than noonday. Inquiry elicited the fact that these huge columns of smoke came from the petroleum tanks at Hoboken, which had been set ablaze by the Belgians themselves in order to prevent the Germans getting hold of one of the largest stores of petroleum in the world.

#### DAYS OF DESPAIR

**M**EANWHILE, the sound of the German guns seemed to have come closer, and shells began to burst unpleasantly near. . . . Some parts of the line held by the Naval Division suffered heavier bombardment than others, but so far, luckily for us, most of the shells were, as the men put it, "non-stop for Antwerp."

It is, perhaps, somewhat difficult for those who were not there to imagine the utter hopelessness and despair of the men who had been sent with the intention of defending Antwerp. Unknown to us, the fate of Antwerp was decided before we arrived.

We had absolutely nothing with which we could reply to the German siege batteries. All that we could do seemed to be to wait as calmly as we could for the end.

About five o'clock darkness was setting in. Antwerp was seen to be on fire in some quarters. Our baggage party arrived and said that the railway station at Wilryck, in which our baggage had been stored, was in flames. This tragic piece of news made many an officer draw a long face as he proceeded to enumerate the various articles of value he had tucked away in his valise, which he was never to see again.

The doctor and I had been sitting in our dug-out for a time, wondering what would happen next, when the drum-major put his head in at one of the openings and exclaimed in a low tone: "We have to clear out immediately, sir, as we are almost cut off on all sides, and they intend using their heavy guns against us tonight."

**O**UR men loathed the idea of a retreat, but the majority realized that every minute the position was becoming more critical and that immediate retreat was our only hope of escaping capture.

Almost all the Belgians had gone, except those in the forts, and in our covering fort only one Belgian gunner remained. One of our naval gun crews gallantly offered to remain and work

*Photopress*





the guns in order to cover our retreat, which they did up to the very last minute. . . .

In order to cross the Scheldt, we were forced to pass by the blazing petroleum tanks at Hoboken. The road was narrow, but it was the only road left. The fumes were overpowering and the intense heat proved too much for some of the men. The flames at times blew right across the road, and large German shells were falling in amongst the tanks at the rate of four a minute. Sometimes a shell would burst with a terrific report in the boiling oil, and flames shot up to the height of two hundred feet.

As we approached the blazing tanks it was like entering the infernal regions. The burning oil had flooded a field on one side of the road and dead horses and cattle were frizzling in it.

"Now, boys," shouted an officer, "keep your heads and run through it!"

And we did—but I don't know how we did it. Once we had got past the oil tanks we were in comparative safety for a hundred yards because the road was sheltered, but then for some thousand yards it was exposed again to the enemy's fire.

We were ordered to run at the double over this bit of road, and most of us were fortunate enough to reach the pontoon bridge over the river. A spy was caught by one of our battalions in the act of trying to blow up this bridge,

but his designs were frustrated just in time, and a bayonet ended his career.

Sentries were posted at intervals while we went across, and shouted "Change your step!" every few yards. At last we were safely on the other side

and breathed again. The relief felt by all ranks on getting across the river can hardly be imagined, and, although even there we were by no means out of danger, yet we knew that a most important step had been taken.



#### INGLORIOUS END OF THE ANTWERP ADVENTURE

Not all the men of the Naval Brigade got safely away from Antwerp. Nearly 1,500 crossed into Holland and were interned at Gröningen. Above, men of the R.N.V.R. are settling down for four years in a concentration camp. Below is the last train to leave Antwerp on October 9 and get safely away. Luckily for those who could only find seats on the roofs of the carriages there were no tunnels to be passed through. The next train was attacked by the Germans and most of the passengers were captured.

*Sport & General, and Imperial War Museum*





**BETWEEN TWO BATTLEFIELDS —  
FROM AISNE TO YPRES**

With these photographs we reach a new stage in our "progress": the beginnings of the terrible stalemate and the long, bloody struggle round the Ypres salient. In October 1914, after the Allied position on the Aisne had become fixed and the fighting line was being gradually extended north, the British Army was withdrawn from the Aisne and moved to north-west Flanders, there to begin the First Battle of Ypres. Above, a Highland Regiment, with pipes playing, is passing through the peaceful countryside from its place of detrainment towards the line, while, left, the 11th Hussars, also bound for Ypres sector, make a midday halt at Bonnières, October 9, 1914.

*Imperial War Museum*



SECTION VI

# The First Battle of Ypres

Oct. 14—Nov. 11, 1914

**D**URING the early days of October 1914 the British Expeditionary Force was removed from the land-locked line of the Aisne to the neighbourhood of Ypres in Belgium.

¶ The heroism with which its battalions fought to stem the German onrush is, in this section of our work, magnificently described by four officers, Captain Brownlow, Captain Needham, Lt.-Col. the Hon. R. G. A. Hamilton and Captain Stacke, while Private H. J. Polley tells his story from the ranker's point of view. ¶ The Territorial battalions began to arrive at the front, and the first gallant action of the London Scottish is recounted by Mr. Herbert de Hamel. ¶ At the same time the British Navy met a major disaster in the tragedy of Coronel, which is recorded by a survivor, Sick Berth Steward J. D. Stephenson.

★ 41 October 14—November 11, 1914

## LIGHTNING GLIMPSES in the BREAKING STORM

by Capt. C. A. L. Brownlow, D.S.O.

**W**HEN we arrived at Zelobes [just west of Vieille Chapelle] there were billeted in and about the village some regiments of French cavalry. On October 14 (1914) I witnessed one of the most dramatic incidents I have ever seen. The morning was fine, and the sun was shining fitfully through angry, ragged clouds as I walked along a muddy lane which led to our billet. Turning a bend in the road I saw a spectacle which made me rub my eyes and wonder if I had not suddenly been transported to Napoleonic times. There, standing at a cross-roads about a hundred yards ahead, was a group of officers in the magnificent uniform of the French Cuirassiers—curved metal helmets with flowing horsehair tails, burnished cuirasses that flashed in the sunlight, gold sword-belts, red breeches and black polished thigh boots.

The group consisted of a general, two colonels, and some staff officers, and all bore decorations on their breasts which added to the splendour of their uniforms. They were on foot and were in deep consultation over a map. Close by their horses champed their bits and pawed the ground impatiently. As I passed an officer called to me and asked if I could give him any information as to the British line. I pulled out a map and explained what I knew of our dispositions. Just as I had finished the general exclaimed:

"Lieutenant C. has not arrived yet?"

"No, mon Général."

"He is late—late!" and he tapped his foot on the ground.

Suddenly someone cried out, "V'la—he comes!" and all eyes were turned on the road, where we saw approaching us an officer on a horse. As he got closer I saw that he was a young man, that his

uniform was covered with mud and his cuirass tinged with rust, and that his horse was exhausted and flecked with foam and blood. He drew up, saluted, dismounted very slowly, and, holding out an envelope, said with an effort:

"The message, mon Général."

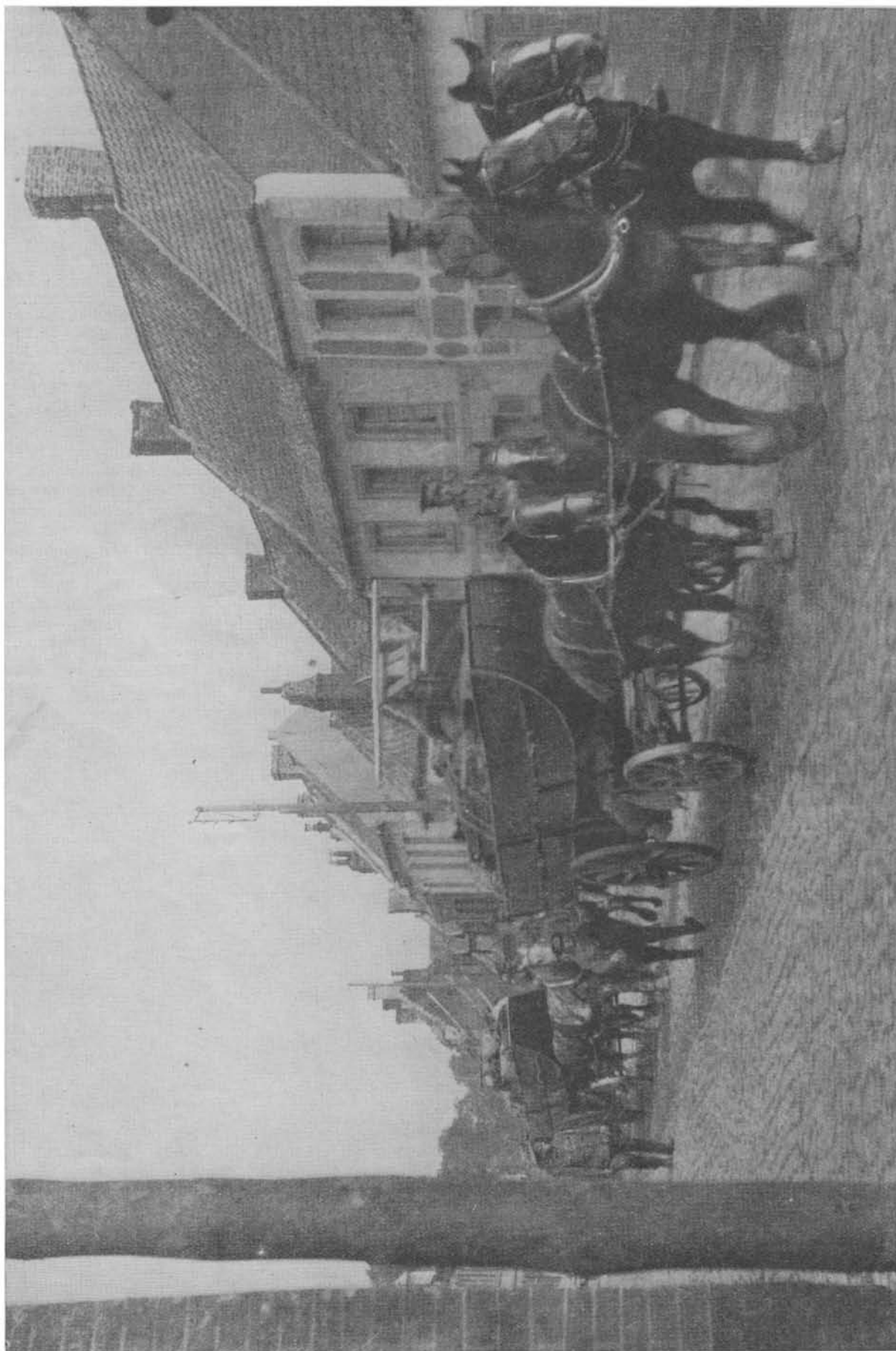
As he did so his face, which had been white and set, turned ashen, he staggered and fell to the ground before that splendid group of men. In the back of his cuirass was a jagged hole, from which thick blood was slowly oozing.

On October 17 we moved forward to Rouge Croix. Everywhere we saw signs of the recent bitter fighting—shattered houses, shell holes and hasty entrenchments. At one spot a sort of nest had been scooped in the ground below a hedge, which had served as the lair of a German sniper. One could see

### PASSING OF THE PAGEANTRY OF WAR

Here is such a scene as made Captain Brownlow rub his eyes, for it seemed to carry him back from 1914 to 1814, when armies were as gorgeously arrayed in the field as they were on parade. The khaki-clad battery as it approaches Zelobes is being overtaken by a squadron of French Cuirassiers, still wearing shining helmets with horsehair tails similar to those of Napoleon's cavalry. They were later to be discarded for the less picturesque but more serviceable tin hats.

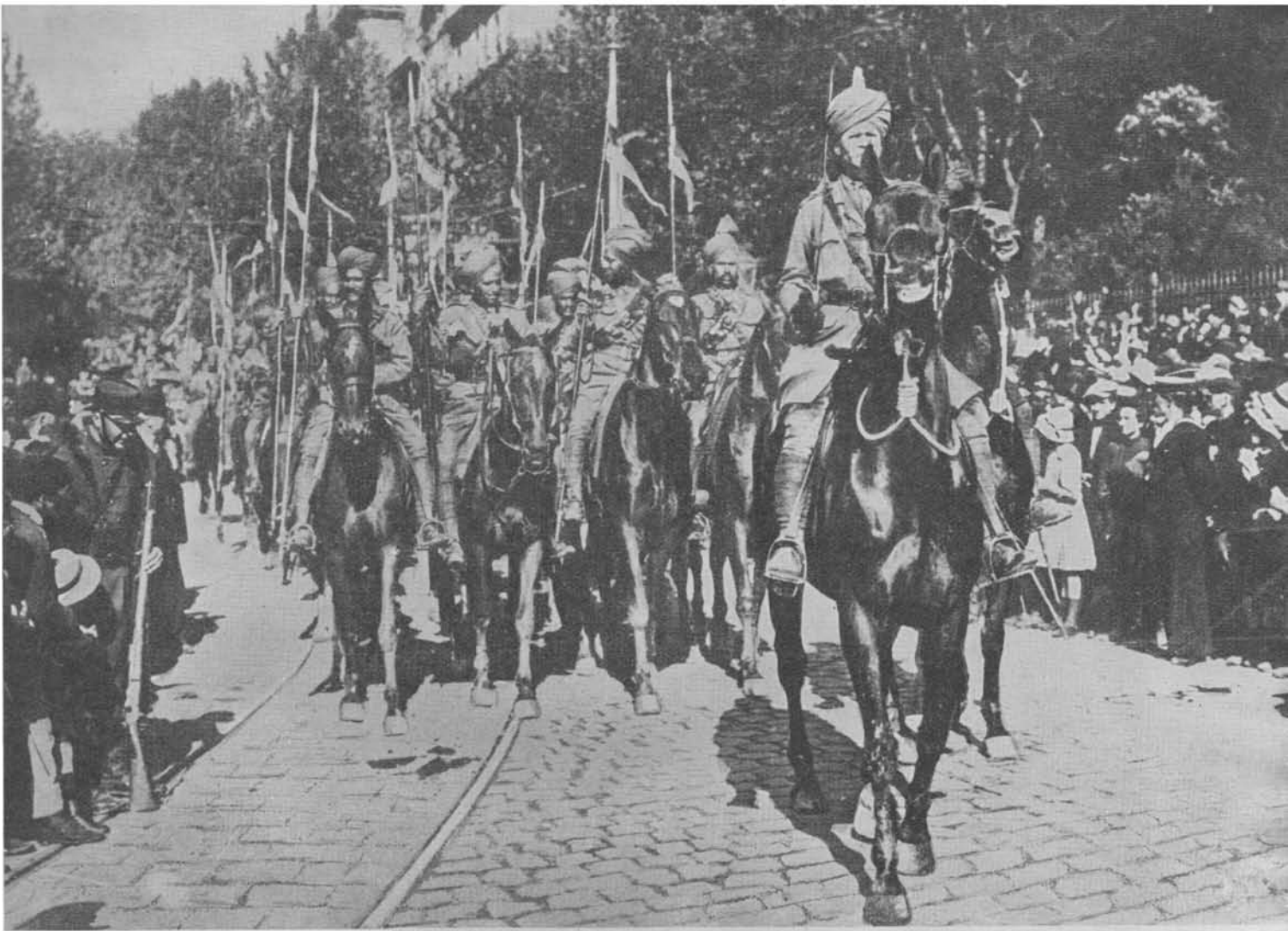




**THEIR MOTTO IS 'EVERYWHERE,' AND ALWAYS THEY WERE TRUE TO IT**  
There could be no more appropriate motto for the Royal Engineers than that which they bear, "Ubique" (Everywhere), for wherever an Army goes, great or small, they must go too, blowing up bridges in retreat and re-building them when the time to advance again comes. Often this and every other variety of their work is done under galling fire. Here is a pontoon train passing through Vieux Berquin, four miles from Hazebrouck. Each wagon carries one pontoon with the other bridging material piled inside it.

*Imperial War Museum*





#### INDIA WAS THERE

With wonder and admiration the French people saw such fine soldiers as these come to their help. The magnificently mounted Lancers above, with their turbans, the pennons of their lances fluttering in the air, and the sturdy Gurkhas below, were typical of the 70,000 men, the flower of the Indian army, who marched through Marseilles towards the front in the autumn of 1914.

the worn marks of the soft earth where he had rested his rifle and his elbow, and in the grass on one side was a pile of empty cartridges, nearly 600 in number. Behind one house was a stiff mass of dead men and horses, where some lucky shooting of our howitzers had spread sudden death among the sheltering teams of an enemy battery.

The next day we moved to Fauquissart. To the east of this village the ground rises gently to a swell of land now known as the Aubers ridge, from the village of that name on it. At this time our line ran from Fromelles by Herlies to near the west of La Bassée, which was still held by the enemy. Our battery positions were just to the east of Aubers village. One day, when taking ammunition up to the batteries, as I was approaching the village of Aubers the enemy started shelling it with field howitzers.





**EAST MEETS WEST IN FRANCE**

L.N.A.

Many an officer and man of the British Army who had served in India had experiences similar to that which Captain Brownlow describes in this chapter and saw in the mist and mud of Flanders famous regiments that they had last seen in the sunshine of India. A good many men of the B.E.F. had served in the East and could make themselves understood by the men of the Indian contingent. In the bleak air of Europe in autumn men of both East and West found a glass of hot French coffee much to their liking.

Heavy, evil clouds of yellow smoke appeared above the church and house tops, and the detonations struck rudely on the ear. Suddenly from the village down the road up which I was making my way there swept a torrent of panic-stricken refugees, who had been sheltering in the village.

**Each individual was fighting a way forward in the confused human mass, all were panting from exhaustion, and in all their eyes was the fixed and startled look of the fear of death.**

On passing through the village I learned that a terrible event had occurred. It was a Sunday, and many of the refugees had gathered in the church for the morning service. As the deep-toned cadences of the priestly voice rose and fell and echoed from pillar to pillar, and as the murmur of many responses whispered through the vaulted nave, there came a sound like the crack of doom, the roof split, slates and masonry fell in a cloud of smoke and

dust, and a confused noise of human shouts and cries and the stampede of many feet filled the air.

**F**ROM October 17 to October 21 we remained at Fauquissart. During this period our advance was brought to a standstill by the hardening resistance of the enemy, who had turned the tables by launching attack after attack against our exhausted infantry. In the northern area of the vast battlefield the situation was the same, the forward movement checked everywhere and the counter-pressure of the enemy increasing day by day.

#### **NO HOPE OF RELIEF OR HELP**

**O**N October 18 the 1st Corps detrained at Hazebrouck, and the Field-Marshal took one of the most momentous decisions of the war in throwing these two divisions, his last reserve, on the left of the line, rather than use them in answering the desper-

ate calls for assistance he hourly received. Onwards to the end of the month the extended troops held on without hope of relief or help of support.

One morning I met a group of officers in the fields just east of the village. They were in deep consultation, pointing here and there and from time to time kneeling down and gazing along the ground. Two sappers were pegging lengths of tape upon the ground, according to their directions.

Following on this, there marched on to the scene a battalion of the 19th Infantry Brigade, who started to dig vigorously along the white lines of the tape. Soon a system of short lengths of trench appeared, with here and there an emplacement designed for a machine-gun.

On October 23 our front line was withdrawn from its position on the Aubers ridge to these trenches, and in conformity with this movement the ammunition column had fallen back to the village of Vieille Chapelle. The reason of this movement was due partly to the now superior strength of the enemy, partly to the left flank of the 3rd Division being thrown too far forward and in consequence being dangerously exposed.

**O**N the afternoon of October 22 I happened to turn from a lane on to the straight road which connects Neuve Chapelle and Estaires. To my astonishment I saw a column of Indian infantry swinging through the flat, prosaic countryside as unconcerned as if they were marching down the Grand Trunk Road in the swirling dust beneath the peepal trees and brazen sun. The column drew near and I recognized the Jullundur Brigade, whom I knew of old—Sikhs and Dogras, Pathans and Punjabi Mussulmans, with dark and bearded faces, expressionless beneath their *pagris*.

At the heads of companies rode the English officers, and in the rear came clattering pack mules and trains of followers, shivering and coughing in the raw cold. The regiments of this brigade billeted for the night in the houses about us, and I was asked to dine with one of them. It was strange to sit in a Belgian room and be waited on by Indian *khitmutgars* and see around you faces which you had last seen laughing and chatting about a silver shining table, beneath a beating punkah frill.

My friend, whose guest I was, was killed very shortly afterwards; he died one dark night on the parapet of a German trench, as he fired upon the enemy beneath him.



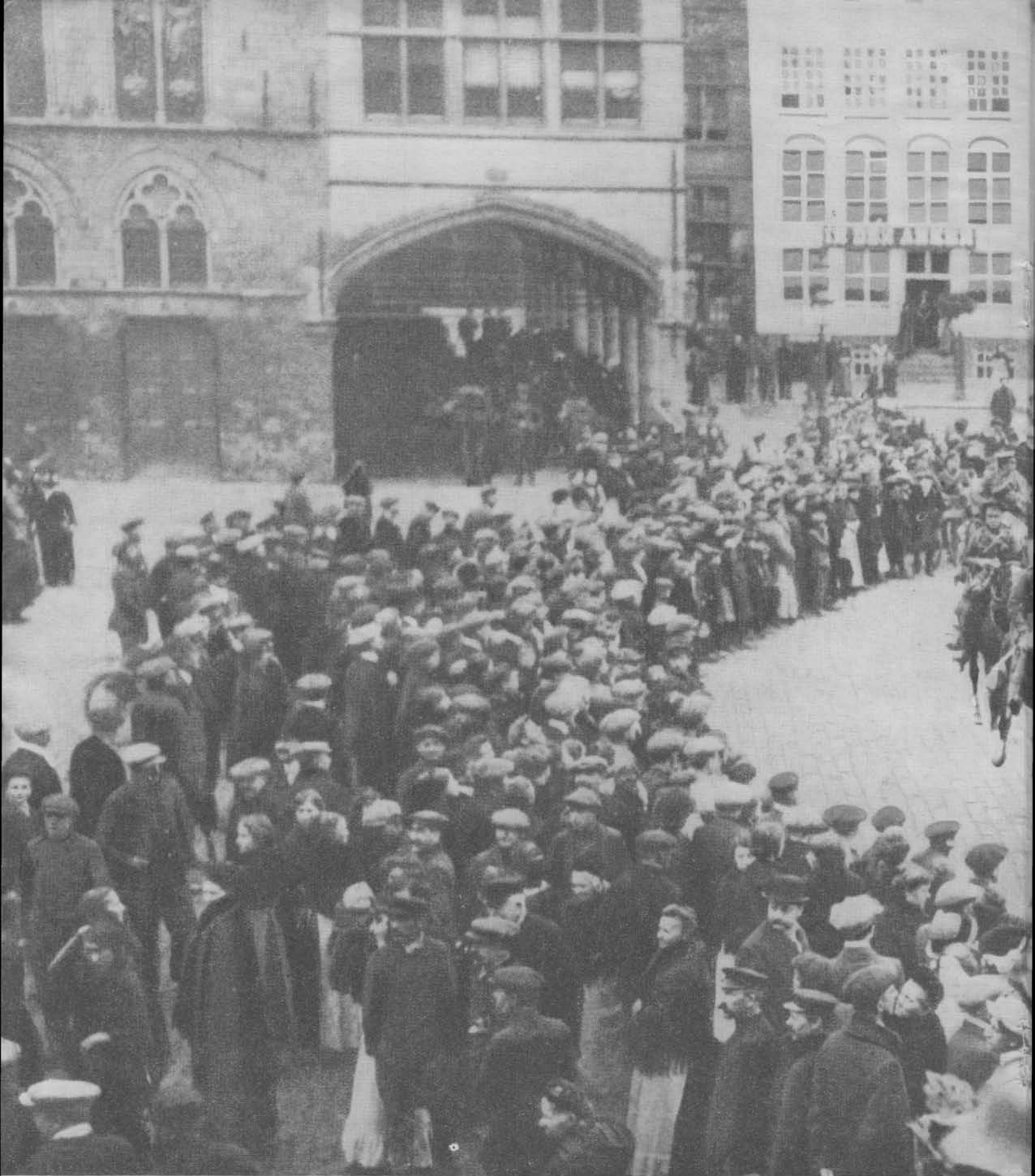


**ON THE ROAD TO YPRES WHEN GREEN COVER STILL EXISTED**

When the British Expeditionary Force took over the left wing of the Allied armies after the battle of the Aisne, British Tommies saw a great deal of the French cavalry. Here French Cuirassiers are passing a Scottish regiment of the 19th Brigade bivouacked in a wood in October 1914. The approach of the troops to the fighting line was made chiefly at night, and they rested in daylight and marched by dark to keep their movements as far as possible secret.

*Imperial War Museum*

E. 3



**THESE WERE THE BRITISH SOLDIERS WHO FIRST SAW YPRES**

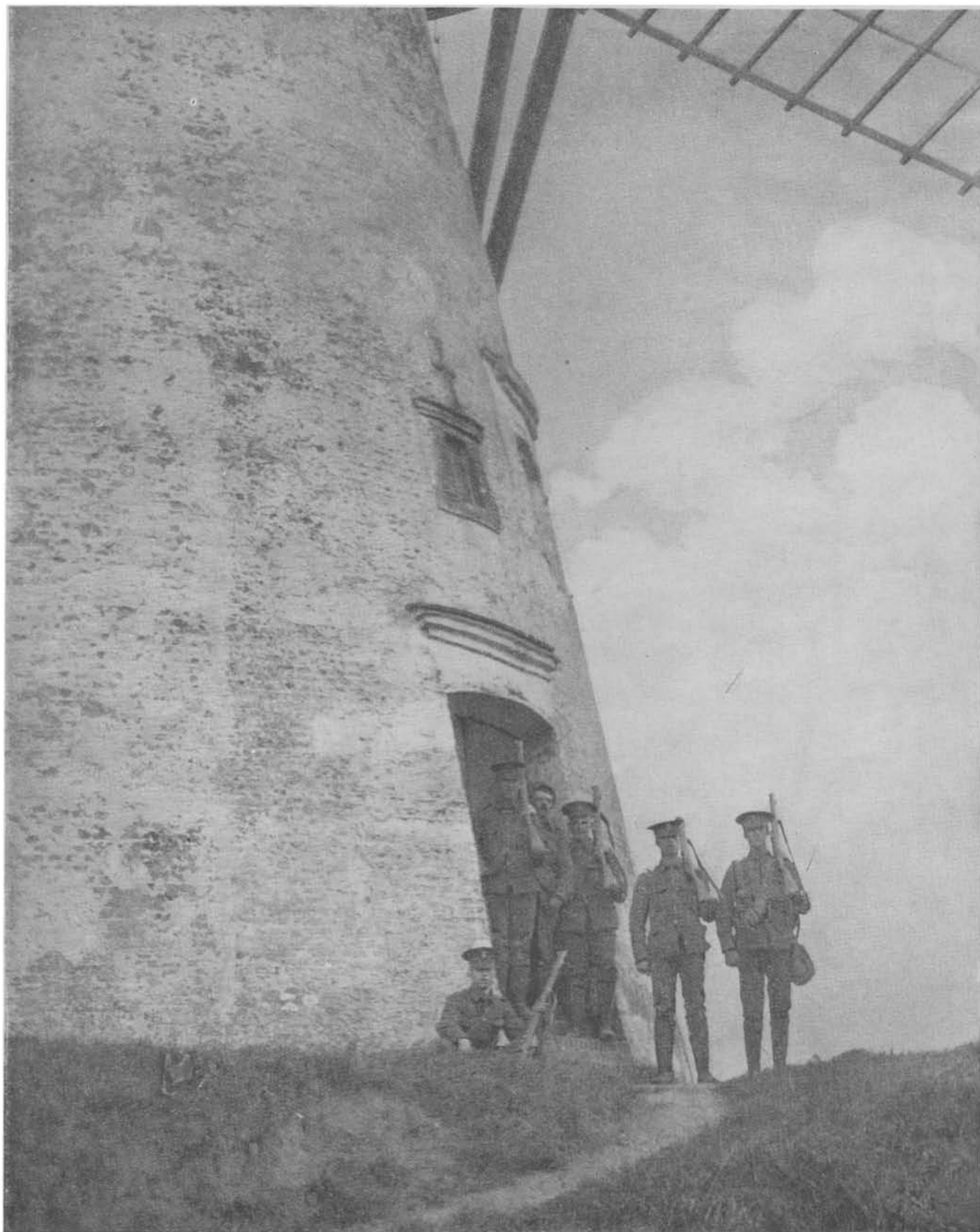
It was when the refugees streamed back through Zonnebeke, as related in Chapter 42 by Lieut.-Colonel Hamilton, that the battle of Ypres really began, but British troops had already entered the town, whose name is emblazoned on the Colours of almost every county regiment. On October 13 the 6th Cavalry Brigade





*Photo, Antony of Ypres*

marched into the Grand' Place, and watered and fed their horses, thus being the first British troops seen by the people of Ypres. Within a few months the fine old houses which the troops are passing were but shattered ruins and the last of the civilian population, here so full of hope, were pitiful refugees.



#### **AT FIRST SHELTERS, THEN DEATH TRAPS**

*Sport & General*

The windmills that dotted the fertile plains of Flanders in the early days of the war were pathetic reminders of a peaceful past. Where once the harvest was ground the sails no longer moved. From every one the miller and his men were gone and the mill served only the dire purposes of war. Some, like this one, were used as observation posts, some as field dressing stations, and in some a deadly nest of machine-guns was planted as described in both Chapters 42 and 43. Those in the actual area of fighting survived for a short time, for the artillery saw to it that such ready made material of war should be the object of direct hits.



# DIARY of Five DREADFUL DAYS when We Lost ZONNEBEKE

by Lt.-Col. Hon. R. G. A. Hamilton, Master of Belhaven



**DIARIST OF WAR**

This gallant soldier, a part of whose diary forms this chapter, was generally known as the Master of Belhaven, "Master" being the courtesy title of the eldest son of a Scottish Viscount or Baron.

*Swaine*

**A**LL that night the population of the country streamed through the town (Zonnebeke) and by next morning (October 19) the streets were fairly clear. Our infantry, after falling back, took up the entrenched line which they had providentially prepared two days before.

At daylight the guns also took up positions immediately in the rear of the infantry brigade. From that moment the battle of Ypres began.

All that day we were bombarded by the Germans, but so far they confined their attentions to the trenches and did not drop shells in the town. Also, they had evidently not yet got up their heavy guns, as we were only under shrapnel fire. The German infantry did not make any attempt to assault.

**I** SPENT most of the morning with Bolster, who commanded the 106th Battery, in his dug-out immediately in the rear of the infantry trenches. He was killed two days later. We were on the crest of a small rise, and thirty or forty yards in front of us, on the forward slope, was the line of our infantry trenches, at that point held by the South Staffordshire Regiment. We had an excellent view of the country to our front, which much resembled Essex or Suffolk, being greatly enclosed and with many hedges and small woods.

Standing in the trench with nothing but my eyes showing, I watched, with Bolster, the enemy's infantry trickling over the skyline. They came into view at 3,400 yards, but as they were in

very open order and came on in short rushes, they did not present much of a target for artillery; and, owing to the farms, woods and hedges, we could only see them here and there as they crossed open patches. This ridge they were crossing was under fire of our guns, and whenever we saw enough of them bunched together, we let off a few rounds at them. I shall never forget seeing some thirty or forty Germans running across a green field which was divided in two by a wire fence probably barbed, as I noticed that on reaching the wire fence they all concentrated and ran through a gate in it. Our lines of fire were already laid out, and from the map we were able to get the range to a yard.

## ONE SHELL—FIFTEEN DIED

**T**HE next time we saw a party crossing the fields and making for the gate Bolster ordered a round of gun-fire. At this short range (2,300 yards) with my Zeiss glasses I could almost see the faces of the Germans, it being a gloriously fine, sunny day.

Just before they reached the gate, he gave the order to fire. The guns, which were hidden behind us, loosed off and we heard the shells whining away. As the Germans clustered in the gate, a shell from No. 1 gun burst immediately in front of them. The whole lot at once lay down, and at first I thought that they were taking cover until our fire stopped. However, I watched them for some hours, and not one of them moved again. I counted fifteen in a circle of some twenty yards diameter.

**B**Y now a good many of the German infantry had crossed the ridge, not only immediately in front of us, but all along the front. Owing to their being so close, and the fact that our guns were behind the crest of our hill, we were unable to reach them. We continued, however, to pour shrapnel on their supports as they crossed the skyline, doing considerable damage.

At one time I was leaning against the wall of a little house, some twenty yards from Bolster, who was in his hole, and I pointed out to him that the enemy were bunching behind a certain clump of bushes. My head was eight or nine feet higher than his, and he could not see them. He, therefore, asked me to range the battery for him, and so one of the ambitions of my life was realized in that I ranged a battery of guns in action. Measuring off the angle between the place at which we were then firing, and the place where I had seen the Germans bunching, with the gratitudes of my glasses, I gave the necessary switch of some five degrees, and ordered a round of battery fire. The ground sloped away from left to right.

**T**HE range on the left was about right, but the right section were short. This was owing to the angle-of-sight being different for the two flanks of the battery. However, as I did not wish to upset the battery angle-of-sight, I increased the range in the right section by fifty yards, and then ordered a round of gun-fire. This was completely successful, two shells bursting in the clump of bushes in which I had seen the Germans collecting. I think that some twenty or thirty of them must have been in these bushes, and when the shells burst I saw only two or three run out. One ran away altogether; the other two, after staggering a few yards, collapsed. The remainder, I think, must have been knocked out at once.

Meanwhile, the German infantry, who were now too close and too much in the hollow below us for our guns to reach, were coming on, and we soon saw their scouts emerge from a pheasant cover not 200 yards in front of us. As the guns were only 200 yards behind us, this was getting uncomfortably close for artillery. However, we did not feel any anxiety, as our own infantry were well dug in between us

and them. As soon as these German scouts appeared our infantry opened fire on them at 200 yards, and the wretched Germans, who evidently did not know of the existence of this branch, began to fall thickly. They at once retired into their pheasant cover, and, being reinforced in considerable strength, opened fire on us.

Things were now very lively, and Bolster could neither leave his observation hole, nor could I leave the wall against which I had flattened myself. At the same time the German field artillery discovered the position of our trenches and the shrapnel began to arrive. Every time one put one's head out it was immediately saluted with half a dozen bullets, which made a noise like very loud and angry mosquitoes as they passed. I stopped at this place for some time, but in the lull of the firing I managed to run back to the gun-line.

**I**N the course of the afternoon General

Lawford asked me to take a message to the colonel of the Staffordshires in his trench. With some difficulty I got there, crawling the last twenty yards, perfectly flat. I found that the Staffordshires headquarters had made themselves extremely comfortable in a very big bomb-proof, which one approached by going down several steps. The colonel

told me that his pioneer sergeant was a coal-miner, and I at once recognized the pitman's work by the way in which the roof and the bomb-proof had been "propped." I had tea with them down there, and a cigarette, and was quite sorry to leave these comfortable and perfectly safe quarters for the perilous journey of returning to Zonnebeke.

I had scarcely left the Staffordshires bomb-proof when a shrapnel burst just behind me and on my right, the bullets striking the ground some ten yards to my right. Ten seconds later the second shell of the pair arrived, and burst ten or twenty yards away to my left. Had I been ten yards more to the right, or more to the left, one or other would have got me.

I had the same luck all the way back, many shrapnel bursting all round, but none touching me.

That night we again stayed in Zonnebeke, the guns being withdrawn at dusk.

All the next day (October 20) the Germans continued to shell our trenches. The loss among the infantry was very heavy, but the guns, being well concealed, and not having been located by the hostile aeroplanes, scarcely suffered at all. As usual, the batteries were with-

drawn at nightfall, and went into billets round Frezenberg some two miles west of Zonnebeke. Our headquarters were in a dirty little inn on the cross-roads in Frezenberg. We occupied our old positions before dawn (October 21), and the battle continued. The Germans had, however, been very heavily reinforced and the attack was much heavier.

**A**BOUT midday the enemy began to bombard the town itself for some hours, but only with shrapnel. This did not do very much damage, but was very alarming, as the bullets from the shrapnel and pieces of the shells flew about the streets like hail. They were firing in bursts—that is to say, six shells arriving at a time. The air was thick with the flying lead, fragments of steel, slates from the roofs, glass and bricks. The noise was appalling: one could hardly hear oneself speak. One really wondered how anything could live in such an inferno, the more so as the main street of Zonnebeke was a prolongation of the German line of fire, and rifle bullets were continuously whining down the street.

About 3 o'clock in the afternoon the "Black Marias" (high-explosive shells) started. Zonnebeke has a church standing in a small *Place*, with a very high steeple, and evidently the German gunners, knowing that our headquarters were in the centre of the town, were using the church steeple as a target. This bombardment in the streets of a town by high-explosive shells was, I think, the most alarming part of the

#### **THE THUNDER OF THE GUNS BEGINS AROUND 'PLUG STREET'**

A battery of 18-pounder guns of the 1st Cavalry Brigade has come into action to the east of Ploegsteert on October 19, during the 1st battle of Ypres. With the team at full gallop, the gun swaying and bouncing over the rough ground, the gunners clinging desperately to the limbers, it has reached this meagre cover. At this time the shell shortage made it impossible for British gunners to return the German fire shell for shell, and here in an exposed position the enemy may get the range and shatter the whole battery.

*Imperial War Museum*





whole experience. Everything in the town shook when one of those shells burst. The whole ground appeared to tremble as if in an earthquake, even when the explosion was 100 yards away.

About 5 o'clock news came down that Major Malony, who commanded the 104th Battery, in action near the level crossing, had been seriously wounded. He was observing from the infantry trenches some 800 yards in front of his guns and at the foot of the windmill by Zonnebeke Station. The medical officer at once went off to try to find a motor ambulance, and I rode up to the station.

THE fire was so hot in the street that I decided to leave Bucephalus under a large porch, and I continued my way to the windmill on foot, keeping close into the walls of the houses on the side from which the shells were coming. So long as the houses in the street were continuous, they afforded me complete protection from shrapnel or rifle bullets, and I was hit only by bricks and mortar from the walls of the houses; but as I neared the outskirts of the town the houses became detached one from another, and then it was very unpleasant having to cross the spaces between them. The shrapnel was bursting at intervals of ten or fifteen seconds, and it was impossible to judge when they would come. However, I found that by waiting until a shell had just burst, I usually had time to run like a hare to the next house. The rifle bullets, of course, could not be legislated for at all.

#### ONE IN TWELVE ALIVE

I EVENTUALLY reached the windmill close to Malony's observation post. Here I found a young officer of, I think, the Queen's, who was sheltering under the mound of the windmill with some twenty men. He told me that he and his men were all that were left of a company of 250. He also told me that Malony had been dragged out of his trench and was lying behind a cottage on the other side of the road. On reaching this, I found that he had already been moved back towards his battery. I could see him being carried on a stretcher. He was now under cover from rifle-fire and it was much better to let them continue across the 800 yards intervening between where he was hit and the battery, than to take him all the way round through the streets of the town, which were being heavily shelled.

I therefore started back down the street towards where I had left my horse, and was met by the motor ambulance which the doctor had sent up. I stopped it, made the man turn round and got in beside him, telling him to drop me when we passed my

horse. The motor was a Daimler with the well-known scuttle-dash. I sat on the floor and stuck my head well under cover of the dash. I thought that if I was going to be hit I might as well avoid getting it in the head.

In spite of the shells bursting in front and behind us the ambulance was not hit, and the driver certainly exceeded the speed limit.

I found Bucephalus happily munching some hay, and remounted him. I sent the ambulance on to the level-crossing.

By this time the Germans had got the range of the church very accurately, and the open place which I had to cross was thick with white smoke from bursting shrapnel. I never expected to cross it alive. The street was paved with round cobbles and covered with slimy mud—a place, under ordinary circumstances, I should have hesitated along at a walk. However, on this occasion we negotiated it, including a right-angle corner, at as fast a gallop as poor old Bucephalus was capable of, and regained the cover of the narrow streets untouched.

I FOUND the ambulance at the level-crossing, and took it up to the farm, where we were joined by the medical officer. Malony had just arrived at the farm and was lying on some straw in the kitchen, with several other wounded men. At first I thought he was dead, the bullet having struck him on the side of the head and apparently had passed through the brain. He had been looking through his director when hit. He was breathing very heavily



#### RISEN FROM ITS ASHES

As early as October 1914 Zonnebeke was subjected to the furious bombardment so graphically described in this chapter. It was only the beginning of the storm, and the cruel rain of steel poured on to the luckless town till not one stone was left upon another. But Zonnebeke has risen from the ruins, and here is the church that has today replaced that wrecked in the holocaust of the Salient.

*Photo, A. J. Insall, copyright A.P. Ltd.*

and the doctor thought he was in a very bad way. I was, however, able to tell him that only an hour or two before, Malony had told me that he had a bad attack of asthma, and this probably accounted for the breathing.

We got him into the motor ambulance and sent him off to Ypres. The doctor and I trotted along the road leading from the farm to the main road, immediately behind the ambulance.

It was now just dark. The wagon-line of Malony's battery was in a field beside us. The battery had not been shelled all day, but suddenly a single shrapnel burst twenty feet above our heads in the darkness. It must have been a chance shot. The ambulance put on speed and the doctor and I galloped after it. At the time we had no idea that the shell had done any damage. However, the next morning, we heard that it had flattened out two complete teams. Our infantry were all this time



### BATTLEFIELD HALLOWED FOR ALL TIME BY BRITISH HEROISM

This peaceful stretch of country is the Ypres salient as it is today, all ravages of war removed, but still the home of memories as glorious and tragic as any that cluster round the war fields of France and Flanders. This photograph, showing the generally flat character of the land, was taken from the tower of the church at Zonnebeke (seen in the previous page) looking west with Ypres on the skyline. A sketch map of the whole area appears in page 206.

*Photo, A. J. Insall, copyright A.P. Ltd.*

being subjected to appalling fire both by shrapnel and "Black Marias," the trenches in many parts being completely blown in, and the men in them buried alive. They dug out as many as they could, but when the cover was gone the survivors were exposed to view, and as nothing can live under fire unless entrenched, I fear that many of the men were buried alive.

**B**y nightfall it was obvious to General Lawford that our position was becoming untenable, and it was decided to withdraw as soon as it was dark.

By this time we had no supports, the supports and reserves having long ago been sent up into the trenches. Even the General's own headquarter guard had gone up, too. The only men available were some belonging to a company of the R.E. These hastily threw up a little shelter trench at the level crossing, and if the worst came to the worst we hoped to be able to hold the crossing until the remains of the infantry got through.

Unfortunately, we had no position prepared in rear, and it seemed quite likely that we should have no chance of digging in at a fresh place. The same thing had been happening on our right, and the other brigades were compelled to withdraw also. The remains of the brigades evacuated their trenches and retired in the course of the night in good order and without confusion,

though most of the baggage was lost. At dawn the next morning (October 22) we took up a position extending roughly from the level-crossing west of Zonnebeke to the V of Veldhoek. This line, unfortunately, passed through a thick wood, and it was in this wood that on succeeding days our losses were most heavy.

The previous afternoon we had been much bothered by spies, who adopted every possible sort of trick to communicate with the enemy. At one time it was noticed that the arms of a certain windmill were turning in a most erratic manner. The windmill was deserted, the sails furled, and there was apparently no one in it. It was, therefore, quite clear that someone was playing with it; and by the time we reached the windmill the spies had got away. We blew it up next day.

### MOST DANGEROUS SPY HUNT

**W**E also suspected that the Germans had adopted their usual trick, when evacuating a town, of leaving men behind, concealed usually in the cellars of the houses, with a telephone.

General Lawford instructed me to go with the provost-sergeant and search the houses for spies. This was as unpleasant a task as one could well hope to perform.

By now the eastern part of the town, where I was searching, was being subjected to a heavy and continuous

shrapnel fire. The street was also enfiladed by rifle fire. All the doors had been locked by their owners before leaving the town, and I think that this part of Belgium must make a peculiarly strong form of locks and bolts. I never would have believed it would have been so difficult to break in doors. However, at last we found a forge, and in it a large bar of iron, so heavy that it was as much as two men could do to carry it. Our task now became quite easy. The sergeant and I would take up our positions, revolver in hand, on each side of the door, while two men charged across the street with the heavy bar of iron. One blow was almost invariably enough. The bar and its carriers would collapse on the pavement, while the sergeant and I rushed in.

**W**E searched dozens of houses in this manner, but found them all empty. However, we came to one house where, on rushing in, we were met by a man in plain clothes with a rifle, who immediately fired and shot the provost-sergeant practically through the heart. He did not live many minutes, but our assailant did not survive to see the result of his treachery.

By now the roofs of the houses were coming in, and I withdrew my search-party to brigade headquarters and reported to General Lawford that I did not consider it possible to continue a house-to-house search until the fire moderated. He approved of my action and ordered the search to be discontinued.

The enemy captured Zonnebeke immediately after we left, but fortunately did not press their attack.



## THE LONG, LONG BATTLE FOR YPRES BEGINS

### SCOTS in the SALIENT

It was in such seemingly peaceful surroundings as this that the opening stages of that terrific clash of arms, the First Battle of Ypres, described in this chapter, took place. Right, men of the 2nd Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders are passing through the village of Vlamertinghe three miles east of Ypres, to man the Le Maisnil section and meet the full fury of the German artillery fire.

Below is a scene in a farmyard. The upper door of the barn, through which straw was hoisted only a few days earlier, is open; a Scottish soldier looks out from this inconspicuous observation post across the peaceful farmyard for signs of enemy activity.

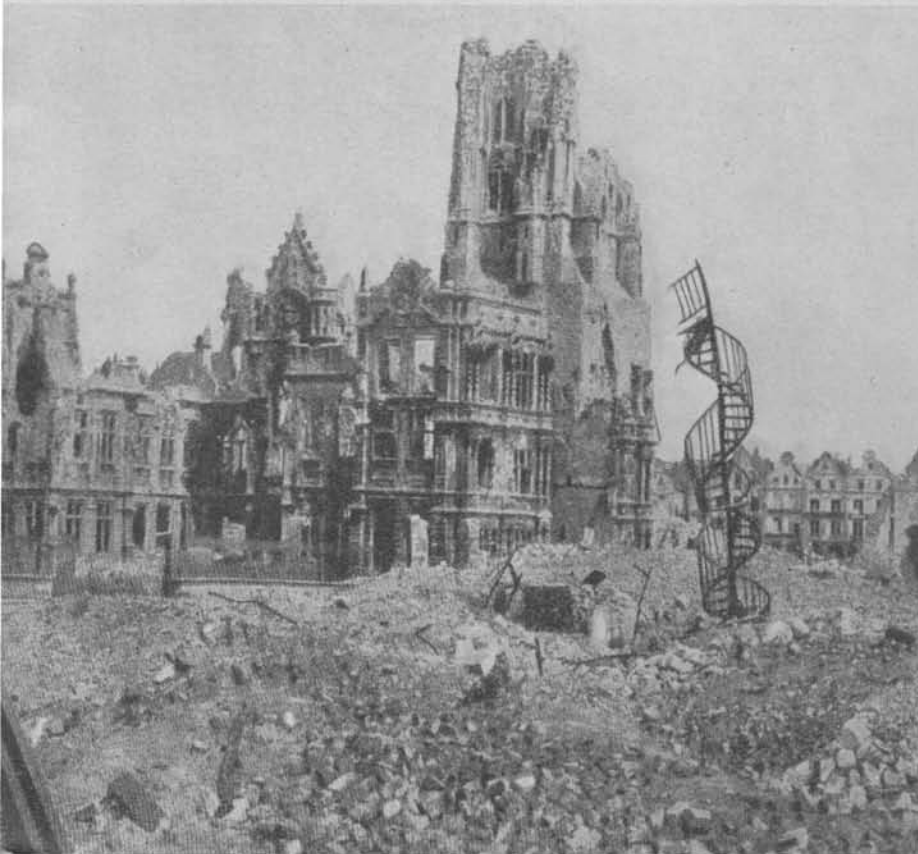
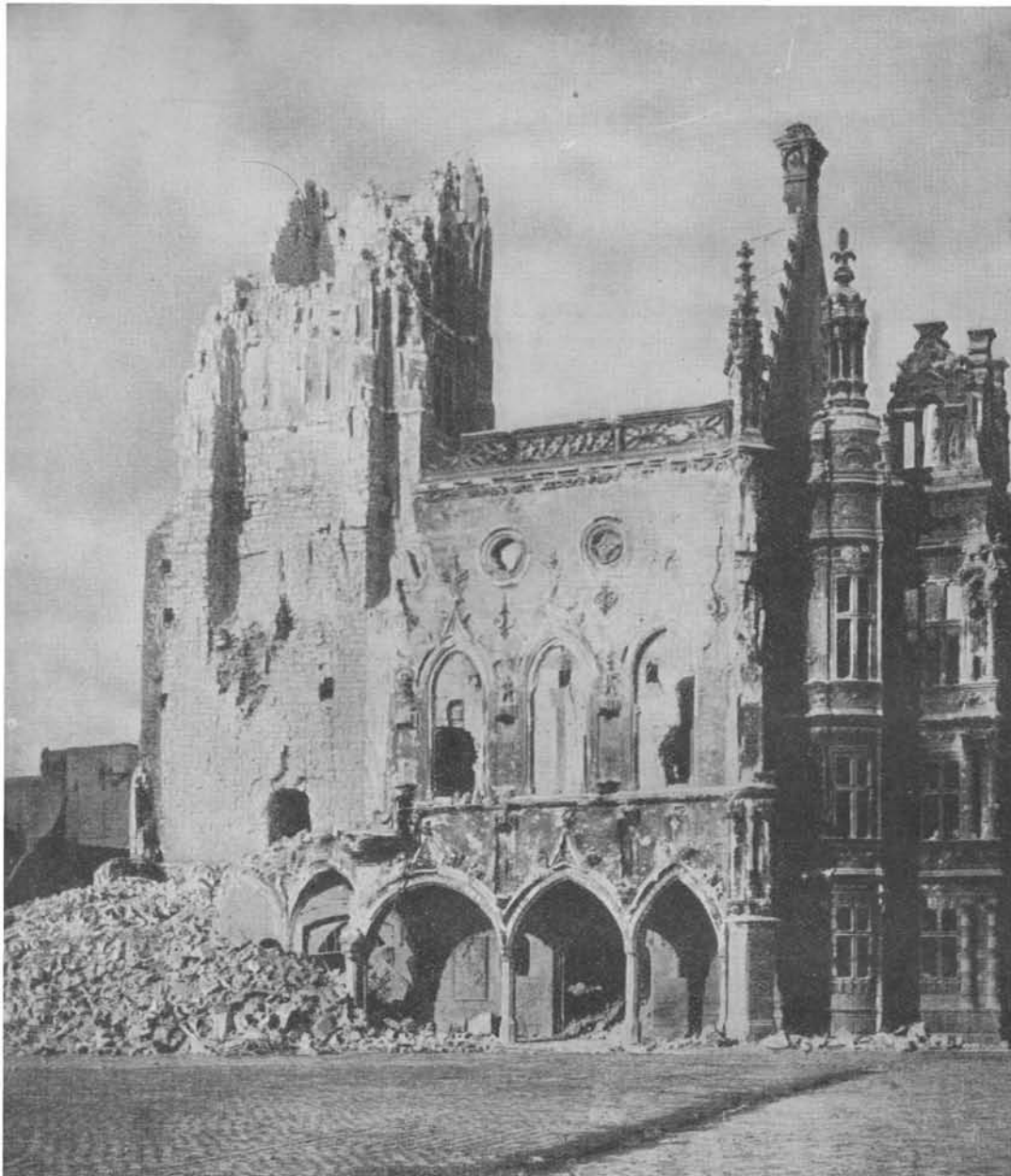
*Imperial War Museum*



## WHEN THE GLORY OF ARRAS WAS LAID LOW

Few towns in France suffered more terribly from the ravages of war than Arras. Its proudest possession was the Hôtel de Ville, standing in the Petit' Place, a glorious example of 16th century French architecture with a graceful belfry. The photograph, left, shows the Hôtel de Ville as it was in November 1914, and that below, left, gives another view after the second bombardment. Only a spiral iron staircase marks the site where houses once stood. Below is the rebuilt belfry as it is today, a replica of its former beauty.

*Photos, E.N.A.*



# CABARET OF DEATH!

## Shelled by Friend and Foe

by Captain E. J. Needham

*In one of the most vivid narratives ever written of early fighting in the Ypres salient, Captain Needham, of the Northamptonshire Regt., here tells of a day and night of bloody battle in the neighbourhood of the Kortekerk cabaret and of Langemarck and Poelcappelle. These villages, later known as mangled and unrecognizable ruins, in October 1914 still retained their red roofs and church steeples*

**O**CTOBER 22, 1914. I found the battalion lining a railway embankment about a quarter of a mile away out of the village of Langemarck. I asked what had happened, and was told that the Germans had attacked the 1st Brigade, who were holding the line in front of the road running between Langemarck and Steenstraat, and the line to their left, which was held by dismounted French cavalry. These latter, having no entrenching tools of any description, had been unable to "dig themselves in" and were soon driven out of their line. The Huns had occupied this and had enfiladed the left of the 1st Brigade line, held by the Cameron Highlanders, who, in their turn, were driven out of their trenches. Heavy fighting in this neighbourhood was still going on.

We stayed on the railway bank for about an hour and then got orders to return to Pilckem, but to hold ourselves in readiness to move at very short notice. We marched back, and just as we arrived at the village the head of the battalion halted. We could see the brigade commander, General Bulfin, and his brigade-major in conversation with the colonel. Presently the colonel rode back to us and told us we had to return immediately and take back the trenches lost by the Camerons. "C" Company was to lead the way, and I was told, not at all to my satisfaction, that I was to go ahead with the "point" of the advance guard, taking every possible precaution, as nobody knew just where the line was, just where the Camerons were, or the enemy.

**I**T was now pitch dark; in fact, one of the darkest nights I have ever known in my life. It was impossible to see more than a yard in front. I think that for the next half hour or so I was more thoroughly frightened than at any other time during the war. Moving up a lane in the inky darkness, not knowing where one was going to, but only that

somewhere ahead were the enemy, waiting for us. We moved along the ditches on each side of the road so as not to give away our advance by the sound of our feet tramping along the hard surface of the lane. After going about two kilometres, suddenly from the left-hand side of the road came a loud "Halte! Qui va là?" As soon as I had recovered from the shock of this sudden challenge in the dark I called back, "Amis, anglais." "Passez vous, mes amis," called back the French sentry, who I could just make out was standing outside a small cottage. On we went, thankful to have been challenged instead of shot at first and challenged afterwards!

### THE GERMANS WERE VERY NEAR

**A**FTER another two kilometres or so we heard footsteps coming down the road. I promptly halted my men and passed the word back to halt the rest of the advance guard and main body, and waited till the footsteps sounded quite close. Then I called out, "Halt! Who goes there?" A voice answered, "Medical officer, Cameron Highlanders, with Captain Cameron, badly wounded. Who are you?" I told him, and asked where the Camerons were and also the Germans. He told me that about a kilometre farther on was a cross-road, and that if we turned to the left there we should find the remnants of the Camerons about eight hundred yards up that road, and that the Germans were about four hundred yards beyond them again. I thanked him and on we went again.

Presently we heard the rumble and rattle of horse transport to our right, and shortly afterwards we reached the cross-roads; and there, just arrived at them, was a whole lot of horse transport. I asked them who they were, and they replied they were the 1st Brigade First Line Transport. I asked if they were aware that the Germans were only about a thousand yards away, and they said

they had not the slightest idea of it. I told them they had better stay where they were and keep as quiet as possible until our colonel came up, and then ask him for orders. They were very lucky to arrive there just when they did and when we did, for otherwise they would have ridden right into the Germans, or, at any rate, to within a few hundred yards of them, and they must have been heard and fired upon with disastrous results, as the lane was much too narrow for them to have turned round and retired.

**W**E marched on once more, still keeping to the ditches at the side of the road, and some minutes later we were suddenly challenged again—in a very Scotch accent. This proved to be the sentry over the Camerons' headquarters—a farmhouse, in and around which were the remains of that battalion. I told him who we were and asked for an officer. One soon appeared, and told me that we must keep very quiet, as the enemy were quite close by, along a road running at right angles to the one we were on, about three or four hundred yards ahead. This officer went down the road to speak to Colonel Osborne Smith and to tell him the situation. In the meantime, we stayed where we were.

Very shortly afterwards we heard loud shouting, cheering and singing in front of us, which we gathered was the merry Hun disporting himself after his victory of the afternoon! After waiting about half an hour, Bentley [a company commander] came up to me and said



### COMMANDING THE 2nd BRIGADE

General Bulfin commanded the 2nd Brigade during the incidents described in this chapter, and later the 28th and 60th Divs. and 21st Corps. He was wounded on November 1, 1914, after being promoted Major-General for distinguished service in the field in the previous month.

*Elliott & Fry*





#### YPRES AND THE EVER-FAMOUS SALIENT AS IT WAS IN 1914

This sketch map shows the country round Ypres as it was when the first battle of Ypres was fought between October 20 and November 22, 1914. It is impossible to indicate the exact position occupied by the British Army, for the line was still fluid and varied from day to day as the enemy made a succession of thrusts in a desperate effort to break through. The position did not become stabilized until after the second battle of Ypres in April and May 1915.

that "C" Company were to extend across the field to the right of the road, advance towards the enemy and drive them out of their position, with "D" Company on our right. Shortly afterwards the rest of the company came filing up the ditch and then out to the right across the fields. They were followed by "D" Company, who carried out the same manoeuvre. Presently the word was passed down from the right for both companies to advance, and off we went, stumbling over turnips, trying to keep touch with the man on our right and left, and utterly unable to see anything.

Suddenly heavy firing broke out on our right and we heard cries of alarm, accompanied apparently by much gut-

tural cursing, to our front. A few bullets started to come our way, so we lay down and fired five rounds rapid into the darkness to our immediate front and then charged, yelling at the tops of our voices. We arrived at the road to find the enemy gone, and promptly started to "dig ourselves in" as hard as we could. After a while, Bentley came along, and sent me back to try to find one platoon which had got lost in the dark. I wandered off, edging away to my right, and presently came to the lane we had left, in the ditch of which I found about half a company of Coldstream Guards.

During all this time, heavy fighting was going on on our right, where "D"

Company were attacking a mill, in which were some German machine-guns. Just about the time Russell (a fellow subaltern) and I reached our line, the mill was captured and our machine guns were installed in place of the Germans'. Things now quieted down, and we were able to dig in peace. I spent the whole night walking up and down our line, very cold and very hungry. We had all gone supperless as we had moved out of Pilkem too early, and it was quite impossible for the cooks to come up anywhere near us, and even if they had it would have been impossible for carrying parties to find our line in the intense darkness.

Just before dawn we were able to make out a small cottage immediately in front of "C" Company's line. We sent out a patrol under a sergeant to find out if it was occupied, and they presently returned to say they had found the dead body of a man, stark naked, but from his

identity disk round his neck, a private in the Cameron Highlanders. The Huns had evidently made off with his kit and accoutrements, and no doubt some Hun had a wonderful souvenir to send home in the shape of the unfortunate man's kilt!

We "stood to" for about a quarter of an hour and then "C" Company was ordered to occupy some trenches to our right front, about one hundred and fifty yards in front of the road, which the Camerons had been driven out of the evening before. Just before we "stood to," a terrific outbreak of firing on our left broke out. I must explain that at the junction of the lane by which we had come up from Pilkem, and the Langemarck-Bixchoote road

on which we now were, stood an inn called the "Kortekeek Kabaret," and this was strongly held by the enemy.

On the side of the road on which we had spent the night, and about four hundred yards east of the inn, stood the mill which "D" Company had attacked and captured during the night. This outbreak of firing heralded a strong attack by "A" Company, in conjunction with some of the Camerons, on the inn, which was successful in so far as they got right up to the inn, but the opposition was too strong for them, the Germans having a large number of men and many machine-guns in it, so that our troops had to retire with heavy losses.

**S**HORTLY after "C" Company had moved without loss or trouble to its new position, the terrible news came along to us that poor old Russell had been killed in this attack. . . . I was frightfully cut up about this, Russell having been one of my best friends in the old days at the Depot. . . . He was one of the nicest fellows I have ever known.

We all got busy trying to improve our new so-called trenches, which were really nothing more than a narrow

ditch about two feet wide and a yard deep. We were now immediately in front of the mill, and very shortly after we took up our position, to our horror our guns started to shell it! We sent back messages to battalion headquarters to ask them to let the gunners know that we were in front of the mill, but the shelling continued; and presently the Germans started to shell it, too.

#### CURSING OUR OWN GUNNERS

**S**o now we were in a lovely predicament: we were collecting all the German "shorts" and our own gunners' "overs," and could not do anything but lie at the bottom of the ditch shivering and cursing with fear and rage, and sending back messages at intervals to try to get our gunners to give their attention elsewhere, where it was more needed. This double shelling continued off and on the whole day and we had several casualties from it.

About 9 or 10 o'clock the Queen's came up and, advancing through the Camerons and the remains of "A" Company, attacked the inn, with the 60th and Loyal North Lancashires attacking on their left. This time the

attack was successful, the inn being captured together with about three hundred Germans, many more of them being killed. After this the morning dragged on, fine but coldish.

The mill continued to be bombarded by both sides, and heavy firing was going on on our right all the time, where the 1st Brigade were heavily engaged. In front of "C" Company the ground, a field of roots, sloped away down to the little stream of the Hannebeek, the banks of which were clearly defined by pollarded willows. Behind this stream again, the ground sloped upwards gradually to a small wood stretching along a low ridge.

**T**HE stream was about three hundred and fifty yards in front of us, and the wood another four hundred yards behind that again. To our right front and about a mile away stood the church and red-roofed houses of Langemark, and beyond that again and about the same distance away from it, the church and roofs of Poelcappelle. No food had come up to us during the morning, not even our usual tea and rum, and we had to fall back on our "iron rations" of bully beef and biscuits. About 1 p.m.



#### WAITING FOR AN EASY MARK

It was in country such as this that the incidents described in this chapter took place. Here, beside a country road along which a few days before farm carts had slowly trundled, a surprise is in store for any wearer of field grey who shows himself. British troops have found a ready-made trench in a ditch, and the flat field, characteristic of the Flanders landscape, from which the crops will now never be gathered, affords a sharp horizon against the sky for any oncoming troops to cross.

we could see large bodies of Germans collecting in the wood on the ridge opposite, and "Jumbo" Bentley and I knelt up in our ditch so as to be able to see better what they were up to, and both scanned the wood closely through our field-glasses.

Suddenly I felt a terrific blow on my right arm, just as if somebody had hit me on the funnybone as hard as he could with a sledge-hammer. It spun me round like a top and I collapsed in the bottom of the trench. The man next to me rolled over and said, "You ain't 'alf bloody well got 'it in the 'and, sir!" and on looking down I saw that my right hand was a mass of blood.

My arm still felt numb from the blow, and I could hardly realize that it was my hand that was hit, as it did not hurt at all. However, this man cut my field dressing out of my tunic, and after dousing my hand with iodine, which *did* hurt, he bound it up very well; he then made a sling out of my woollen scarf which I was wearing, insisted on giving me one of his own cigarettes and lighting it for me, and told me not to worry, I was "for 'Blighty'" all right with that packet! This sounded too good to be true, and I felt distinctly better.

He also said, and I then realized it for the first time, that I had been very lucky not to be killed, as I had my field-glasses up to my eyes and the bullet which had hit my right hand would have got me in the head if it had been one inch farther to the left! He told me my right collar badge was badly dented and the bullet must have hit this after hitting my hand. About five minutes after I was hit, a man two away from me on the left was kneeling up looking out towards the Germans when he was shot

straight through the head. We came to the conclusion that there must be snipers lying in one of the pollarded willows by the stream, about three hundred and fifty yards in front of us, and that they must be pretty hot shots. Anyhow, Bentley gave orders that no man was to expose himself from now onwards unless we were attacked.

All this time shells from both sides kept dropping on and around the unfortunate mill, which was now on fire in several places. I suppose it was the after-effects of the shock of being hit, but anyhow my nerve went completely. I lay in the bottom of the trench expecting the Huns to come over and wipe me out lying defenceless there. Or I began to panic that instead of going home with a nice wound, a shell would land in the trench and blow me up.

#### I SWEATED WITH FUNK

I LAY and sweated with funk, and the farther the afternoon drew on, the worse my nerves got. It was impossible with that d—d sniper in front to get out of the ditch and walk away over the open to find the dressing-station; the only thing to do was to lie where I was until night-fall, and then to make a bolt for it, and pray that the Hun did not attack us before that.

About four o'clock we could hear much singing and cheering from the enemy's direction, and this continued for the next two hours. This did not cheer me up, as we all decided that it was the Hun cheering himself up before making an attack upon us. At last it started to get dark, and, at six o'clock,

I said good-bye to Bentley, wished him all the best of luck in the world, and, scrambling out of the ditch, ran across to the road behind us, where I found Cartwright and "D" Company in the ditch. I stopped for a minute to tell him what had happened to me, then said good-bye and bolted round the back of the mill on a short cut for where Cartwright told me battalion headquarters was on the lane running to Pilckem.

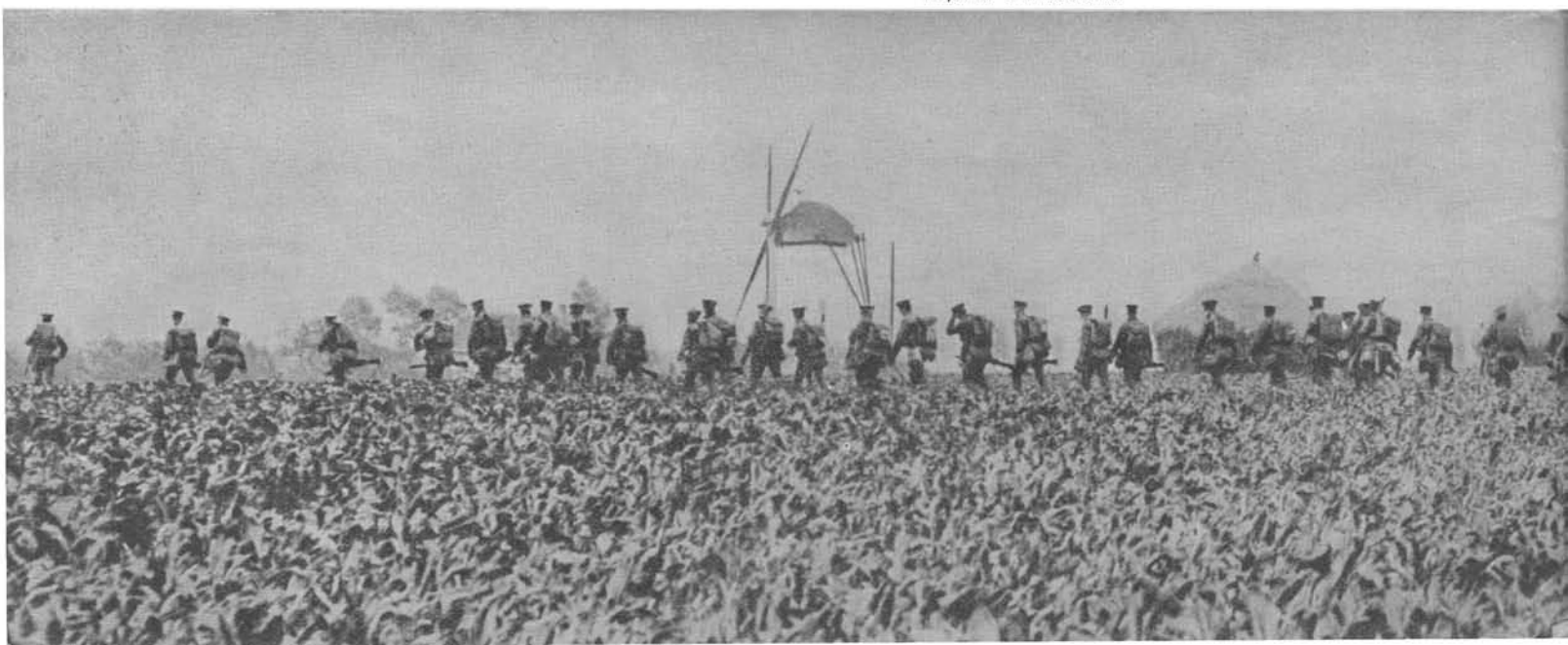
THE man who had bound up my hand insisted on coming back with me and carrying my pack and equipment. As we passed the mill the whole of the top of it fell in, and a huge column of smoke and flame shot up to the skies, illuminating the ground all around over a very big area and, of course, silhouetting us both clearly. Never before or since in my life have I run so fast! It seemed miles to the road, but at last we arrived there blowing and wheezing, and hurled ourselves into the ditch.

I found the colonel and Guy Robinson, reported myself wounded, and was most kindly spoken to by the colonel, who wished me the best of luck and was kind enough to say he should miss me very much. They were both most kind and considerate and told me I should find the dressing-station in the cottage along the lane where the French sentry had challenged us the night before. While we were talking a terrific outburst of gun and rifle fire from the Germans broke out all along the line, and was at once answered by our men. Shells started to burst all round, and spent

#### EASY GOING BY DAY BUT A DEATH TRAP BY NIGHT

This photograph gives some idea of the difficulties that faced the troops fighting in Flanders. Here infantry are advancing in broad daylight across a field in single file. It was, however, a very different matter on a dark night under enemy fire to go forward stumbling over turnip roots as did "C" Company of the Northamptonshire Regt. in Captain Needham's thrilling narrative, with German machine-guns posted in a mill such as is seen in the photograph.

Imperial War Museum







#### FIRST SHADOWS OF WAR FALL ON YPRES

Here, before the ancient Cloth Hall of Ypres, soon to be a battered mass of ruins, stands a strange reminder of the vicissitudes of war. A London furniture van has been pressed into the service of the Army and now has a khaki-clad driver. There is something strangely ironic in the words painted on its side, for it stands in a land where household goods and priceless relics of the past were ruthlessly destroyed and the removals were the pathetic efforts of refugees to save the remnants of their homes.

bullets to "ping" their way past. The colonel told me I had better be off as quickly as I could go, as the Germans were evidently going to attack, so I said good-bye to them both and, accompanied by my faithful volunteer batman, fairly legged it down the lane.

ON and on we ran, expecting every minute to be our last, as shells were bursting all round, but at last we got to the crossroads, where we had stopped the 1st Brigade Transport the night before, and turning to the right found ourselves out of the zone of fire. We arrived at the cottage and I went in,

saw an open door on the left of the entrance passage, and an M.O. attending to a wounded man in the room.

I told him who I was, my regiment, and that I was wounded, and asked him if Captain Lochrin, our M.O., was about. "Oh, yes," he said, "you will find him in the room opposite." I thanked him, crossed the passage and opened the door opposite. On going inside I found, to my horror, poor Lochrin stretched out on his back on the floor, dead!

To this day I cannot imagine why the M.O., who must have known that he was dead, ever let me, wounded as I was, walk in on all that was left of poor Lochrin like that. It gave me an awful shock, and I fairly bolted out of the place and down the lane. We passed some Tommies at the entrance to the village and asked them if there was another dressing-station there, and they told us there was another in the village school.

We found this. Inside the schoolroom the floor was strewn with straw, and in the middle of it were two deal tables on trestles. On these were laid various badly wounded men being attended to by the doctors, who were working in their shirt-sleeves. All

round the tables on the straw-covered floor lay wounded men. The room was stacked with them. An orderly found me a corner somewhere, and I lay down, feeling completely exhausted after all the panic, shocks, and excitements of the afternoon.

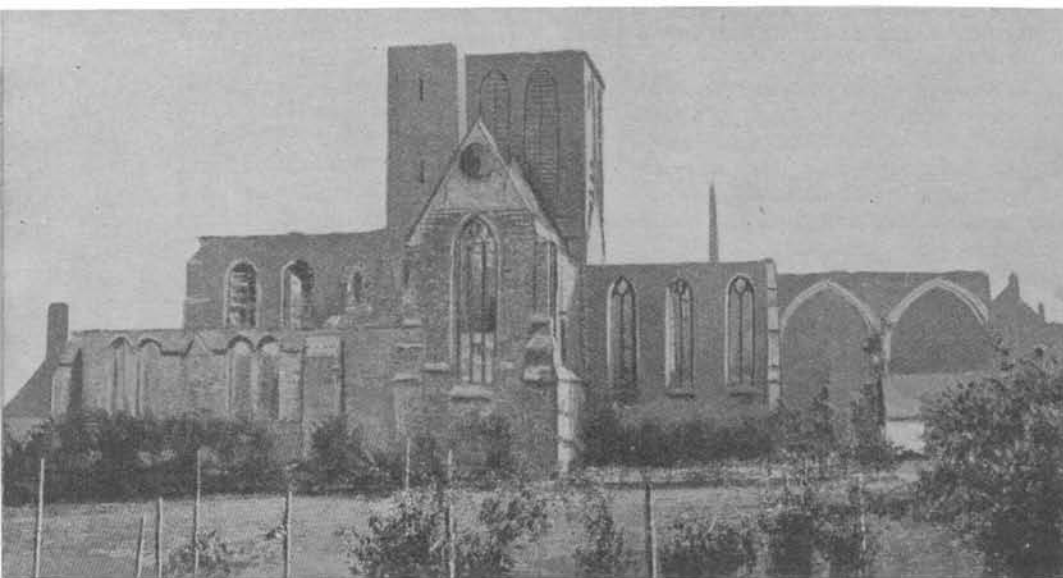
I LAY there from about 7.15 p.m. till 10.30 p.m. The whole time wounded men were being taken out and fresh wounded were coming in, and operations, including amputations of legs and arms, were being performed on the trestle tables. How different from the cleanliness and orderly organization and discipline of the operating theatre in a hospital was the scene in that school-room!

On the walls, maps and pictures of animals and birds; easels and blackboards along the walls; at the tables stood R.A.M.C. orderlies holding candles stuck into wine bottles to light the shirt-sleeved surgeons at their task. They worked quickly, noiselessly and efficiently, without fuss or bother about the awful conditions for such work; they were so kind and gentle to the unfortunate men on whom they worked, most of whom were in terrible agony.





## HOW MESSINES SHARED THE MARTYRDOM OF YPRES



THE opening stage of that terrific struggle, the battle of Ypres, was fought in a peaceful countryside which the Master of Belhaven describes in Chapter 42 as "much like Essex or Suffolk." Among its villages was Messines, around whose name so many memories of almost incredible heroism and poignant tragedy cluster. The interior of the venerable 11th century church is seen (top, left) only a few days after the incidents related in that chapter. It had been set on fire by the Germans on October 27, 1914, and completely gutted, but a wooden crucifix remained untouched by the flames. Below, left, is the exterior of the church at the same date. Already heavily scarred, it was finally razed to the ground beyond hope of restoration. Above is the new village church today, with a captured German gun in front of it, grim reminder of past tragedy.

*Photos, F. Coleman, and A. J. Insall,  
copyright A.P. Ltd.*

# The DAY the WAR was NEARLY LOST *I Helped to Smash the Prussians* by Pte. H. J. Polley

OCTOBER 31, 1914, has been called the most critical day of the whole war. Then it was that the Germans came within an ace of breaking the thin British line and smashing their way through to the Channel ports, the capture of which would have added immeasurably to the difficulties of the Allies. Pte. Polley, of the 2nd Bttn. Bedfordshire Regiment, tells of his experience at that time in simple, vivid phrases, first in the excitement of advance and after in the grim hours of defence

ALL the world knows now how furiously the Germans tried to hack their way through to Calais, so that they could have their fling at the hated English. It is known, too, that they were held and hurled back.

I am going to tell you something of the way in which this was done, for I belonged to the Bedfordshire Regiment, the old 16th Foot, and the Bedfords were part of the Glorious Seventh Division, and did their share in keeping back the German forces, which included the Prussian Guards, who at this time were being rushed up to this sector because it was thought that no troops could stand against them.

These idols of the German nation were picked men and brave fellows, and at that time had an absolute belief in their own invincibility; but events proved that they were no match for the British Guards and the rest of the British troops who fought them at Ypres.

For later these Prussian Guards from Berlin were literally mown down by our artillery, machine-gun and rifle fire, and were left lying dead in solid masses—walls of corpses.

The Kaiser had planned to enter Ypres as a conqueror, at the head of his Guards; but he hurried off a beaten man, leaving his slaughtered Guards in heaps.

ORIGINALLY in the 1st Battalion of the Bedfords, I later went into the 2nd, and I was serving with the 2nd in South Africa when the European War broke out. It is an interesting fact that nearly all the battalions which formed the Seventh Division came from foreign service—India, Egypt, Africa and elsewhere—which meant that many of the men of the Seventh had seen active service and were veteran fighters. They had not learned their warfare at peace manoeuvres in Germany.

Our division consisted of the 1st Grenadier Guards, the 2nd Scots Guards, the 2nd Border, 2nd Gordon Highlanders, 2nd Bedfordshire, 2nd Yorkshire, 2nd Royal Scots Fusiliers, 2nd Wiltshire, 2nd Royal West Surrey, 2nd Royal Warwickshire, 1st Royal Welch Fusiliers, 1st South Staffordshire, and the Northumberland Hussars; and we had a pom-pom detachment and horse, field, and garrison artillery.

We were under Major-General Sir T. Capper, D.S.O.

We had been sent to help the Naval Division at Antwerp, and early in October we landed at Zeebrugge—the only division to land at that port [see illustration page 212]. But we were not there long, for we soon learned that we were too late, and that Antwerp had fallen.

WE were sorry, but there was no time for moping, and we were quickly on the move to the quaint old city of Bruges, where we were billeted for a night. Sir Harry Rawlinson had moved his headquarters from Bruges to Ostend, so next day we marched towards Ostend and took up outpost. Then we had a forced march back to Bruges, and from Bruges we started marching, but we did not know where we were going till we got to the city of Ypres.

So far we had not had any fighting. We had been marching and marching, first to one place, then to another, constantly expecting to come into action, and very nearly doing so, for the Germans were swarming all over the countryside. We had to be content with being on outpost and guarding bridges, and so on—hard and necessary work, we knew; but we wanted something more thrilling, something bigger—and we eventually got it. There was practically only the Seventh Division

available for anything that turned up. The Northumberland Hussars were able to give a very good account of themselves, and were, I believe, the first Yeomanry corps to go into action. The few Uhlans I saw while I was at the Front had been taken prisoners by these Hussars, who brought them in, lances and all. But there is very little to say about cavalry work; it was mostly a matter for the infantry, and, of course, the artillery.

While we were around Ypres, waiting for the Germans to come and break through, we heard a good deal, indirectly, of what was going to happen to us and to England.

The Germans had all sorts of monster guns, and with these they were going to bombard England across the narrow Channel when they got to the French coast, and they were going to work all sorts of miracles with their airship, and aeroplanes.

We soon heard, too, that the Kaiser himself was in the field; but the only effect of that information was to make us more keen to show what we could do. Truth to tell, we were far from being impressed by the presence of either the Kaiser or his vaunted Guards. We were in the best of spirits, and had a sublime belief in Sir John French and all his staff and our own officers.

It was on October 31—which has been called the decisive day of the fight

## 'ALL HIGHEST'

The news that the Kaiser was in the field had no effect on British Tommies but to make them more determined to show him that his army was not invincible, as Pte. Polley states in this chapter. Here is the War Lord talking to one of his generals at the time when the German troops were mown down by the 7th Division.

Photopress





for Ypres, and which was certainly a most terrible day in every way—that the Seventh Division was ordered to attack the German position.

The weather was very fine, clear and sunny, and our spirits were in keeping with it. We were thankful to be on the move because we had had nearly three weeks in the trenches, and had been billeted in all sorts of queer places—above and below ground—under an everlasting shell fire, which became unendurable and was thoroughly nerve-destroying.

We knew what a desperate business the advance would be, because the Germans greatly outnumbered us, and they had planted vast numbers of guns. They had immense bodies of men in trenches, and in a large number of the houses and buildings which commanded the ground over which we had to ad-

vance they had placed machine-guns, with their villainous muzzles directed on us from bedroom windows and holes which had been knocked in walls.

#### A MOST TERRIBLE BUSINESS

FROM start to finish the advance was a terrible business—far more terrible than any words of mine can make you realize. The whole division was on the move, stretching along a big tract of country; but of course no man could see much of what was happening, except in his own immediate locality. Neither had he much chance of thinking about anything or anybody except himself, and then only in a numbed sort of way, because of the appalling din of the artillery on both sides, the crash of the guns and the explosions of the shells, with the ceaseless rattle of the rifles and the machine-guns.

At the beginning the regiments kept fairly well together, but very soon we were all mixed up, and you could not tell what regiment a man belonged to, unless he wore a kilt; then you knew that, at any rate, he wasn't a Bedford.

Some of us had our packs and full equipment. Others were without packs, having been compelled to throw them away. But there was not a man who had let his rifle go: that is the last thing of all to be parted from; it is the soldier's very life. And every man had a big supply of ammunition, with plenty in reserve.

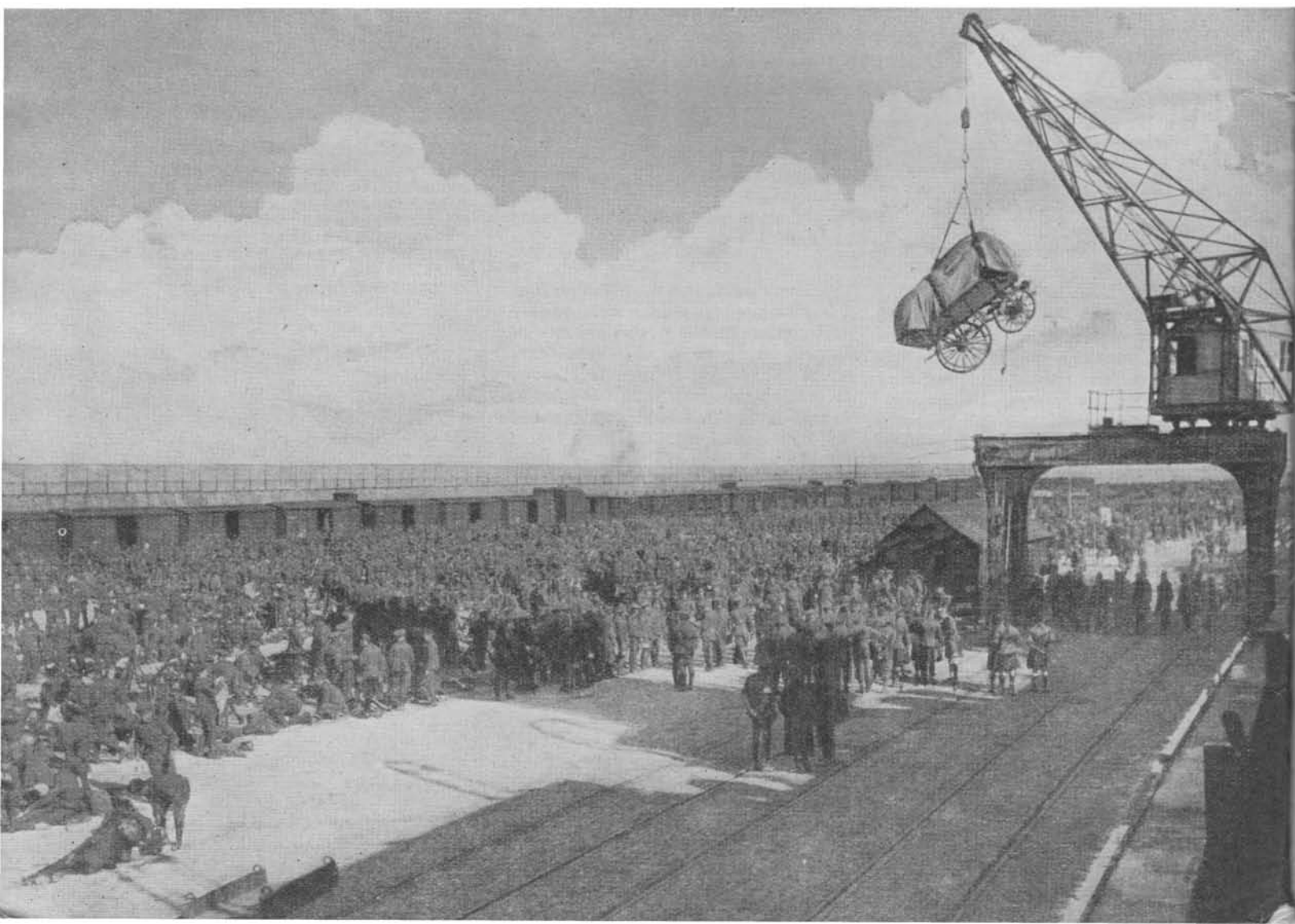
THE General himself took part in the advance, and what he did was done by every other officer present. There was no difference between officer and man, and a thing to be specially noted is the fact that the officers got hold of rifles and blazed away as hard as any man.

Never, during the whole of the war, had there been a more awful fire than that which we gave the Germans. Whenever we got the chance, we gave them what they call the "Englishman's mad minute"—that is, the dread-

#### LAST MEN IN KHAKI TO LAND AT ZEEBRUGGE

The 7th Division that smashed the Prussians near Gheluvelt, as related by Private Polley in this chapter, were the last British troops to land at Zeebrugge before it fell into German hands. Below are some of the men on the quay on October 7, 1914, just after landing. All ranks are already ashore, a train of any rolling stock that could be got together is waiting to take them to the railhead, and the transport wagons are being slung ashore.

*Photo C. Pilkington*





ful fifteen rounds a minute rapid fire. We drove it into them and mowed them down. Many a soldier, when his own rifle was too hot to hold, threw it down and snatched the rifle of a dead or wounded comrade who had no further use for it, and with this fresh, cool weapon he continued the deadly work by which success could alone be won.

I do not know what the German losses were, but I do know that I saw bodies lying around in solid masses, while we passed our own dead and wounded everywhere as we advanced. Where they fell they had to stay; it was impossible to do anything for them while the fighting continued.

The whole of the advance consisted of a series of what might be called ups and downs—a little rush, then a “bob down.” At most, no one rush carried us more than fifty yards; then we dropped out of sight as best we could, to get a breather and prepare for another dash. It was pretty open country hereabouts, so that we were fully exposed to the German artillery and rifle fire, in addition to the hail from the machine-guns in the neighbouring buildings. Here and there we

**ON THE MARCH TO SAVE THE BRITISH LINE**  
The market place of the little Belgian town of Thielt saw strange scenes on October 12, 1914. Here in apparently inextricable confusion is the 7th Division which had landed at Zeebrugge five days earlier, halted on its way to Ypres, where it performed the heroic deeds described in this chapter. Actually there is no confusion, for when the order comes to go forward, each man, each horse, each wagon will take its appointed place in the cavalcade. In the centre of the square is the transport of the 2nd Bn. Scots Guards.

*Photo, G. Pilkington*

found little woods and clumps of trees and bits of rising ground and ditches and hedges—and you may take it from me that shelter of any sort was very welcome and freely used.

A remarkable feature of this striving to hide from the enemy's fire was that it was almost impossible to escape from the shells and bullets for any appreciable time, for the simple reason that the Germans altered their range in the most wonderful manner. So surely as we got the shelter of a little wood or ditch, they seemed to have the distance almost instantly, and the range was so accurate that many a copse and ditch became a little graveyard in the course of that advance.

At one point as we went along I noticed a small ditch against a hedge. It was a dirty, uninviting ditch, deep in water; but it seemed to offer promising shelter, and so some officers and men made a rush for it, meaning to take

cover. They had no sooner scrambled into the ditch and were thinking themselves comparatively safe than the Germans got the range of them with machine-guns, and nearly the whole lot were annihilated. In this case, as in others, the enemy had been marvellously quick with their weapons, and had swept the ditch with bullets. I don't know what happened to the fine fellows who had fallen. We had to leave them and continue the advance.

THE forenoon passed, noon came, and the afternoon was with us; still the fighting went on, the guns on both sides crashing without cessation, and the machine-guns and the rifles rattling on without a break. The air was filled with screaming, bursting shells and whistling bullets, and the ground was ploughed and torn everywhere. It was horrible beyond expression, yet it fired the blood in us, so that the only thing





#### **SCOTS SCOUTS WAIT TO GO FORWARD**

Very different from the ordinary conception of a battlefield is this scene near Gheluvelt, photographed on October 20, 1914, the men, a strong scouting party of Scots Guards, are lying prone because the German artillery is at work. They are waiting orders to move forward. In such unspoilt country as this the hedges, trees and buildings made the work of scouts attempting to discover enemy movements one of extraordinary difficulty.

*Imperial War Museum*

that mattered was to put the finish to the work, get up to the Germans, and rout them out of their positions.

At last, after endless spells of lying down and jumping up, we got near enough to make it possible to charge, and the order went round to get ready. We now saw what big, fine fellows we had to tackle. Clearly now we could distinguish the enemy infantry, and a thing that particularly struck me just then was that their bayonets looked

very cruel. The Germans wore cloth-covered brass helmets, and through the cloth we could see the gleam of the brass in the sunshine.

The nearer we got, the more clearly we saw what splendid chaps they were,

and what a desperate business it would be when we actually reached the long, snaky blades of steel—much longer than our own bayonets—with longer rifles, too, so that the Germans had the pull of us in every way. But all that counted as nothing, and there was not a man amongst us who was not hungering to be in amongst them.

The order to fix bayonets came quietly, and was carried out without any fuss, just as a part of the day's work.

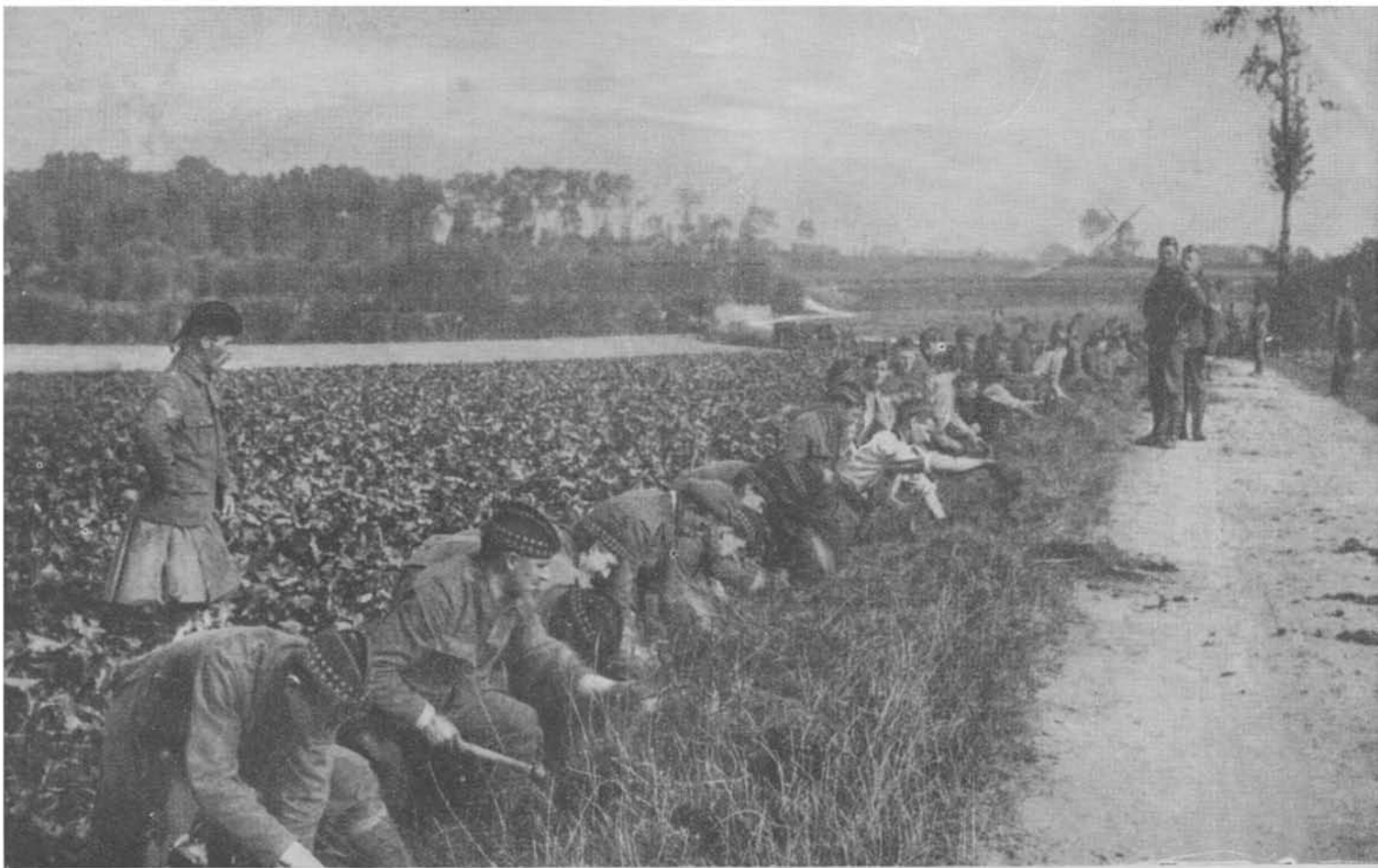
#### **MAKING SURE OF ONE PRISONER**

In the early days of the war, "Jerry" did not surrender as easily as he did in the later stages, when half-trained youths took the place of the men who fought in 1914—the flower of the German Army. This man is marching down, by no means unwillingly, between his guards, on the first stage of his journey to the base, with a prison camp in England as his final destination for the "duration."

*Imperial War Museum*







# **SCOTSMEN OF 'THE GLORIOUS SEVENTH' DIVISION**

The great story of how the 7th Division were rushed up to the front to make a stand against the massed might of the German army, and how they mowed them down in "walls of corpses," is told in page 213.

Here are two regiments of the Scottish Brigade of that heroic division. Above, Royal Scots Fusiliers are making cover when the division fell back and entrenched themselves eight miles east of the Gheluvelt cross roads, while, right, the 2nd Scots Guards are testing a trench at Ghent, where they had been sent to cover the retirement of the Naval Brigade and Belgian troops from Antwerp.

*Photos, C. Pilkington*





Imperial War Museum

# **BOUND FOR THE MAELSTROM OF YPRES**

British soldiers got the friendliest of welcomes from the people of the countryside as they marched towards the battlefields. Here, in front of a small farm, men of the 2nd Scots Guards, 7th Division, are snatching a brief rest and a hasty meal during the march from Thielt to Roulers on October 13, 1914. Two days later the division took its place in the line about five miles east of Ypres and was in the thick of the fighting.

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## Leaves from the Editor's Note-Book

(Continued from page ii of this wrapper)

Falklands. In these three stories we have an example of the catholicity of our work which I commented on in an earlier Part. It cannot be claimed that the admiral's story is better than the signalman's, but it is true that, private or general, sailor or admiral, these eye-witness stories do possess the highest human qualities in their writing.

**O**UR illustrations have already been commented on in this Note-Book, but I think it worth remarking that, knowing the difficulties which I anticipated and experienced in the early stages of this work, I am myself surprised and gratified at the number of really excellent photographs we have been able to publish in these first five Parts. It has long been thought, and accepted almost as an article of faith, that actual War photographs taken in France in 1914 and 1915 were almost non-existent—that the soldiers did not carry cameras with them, and that if they did so they were too busy fighting to use them. However, with the aid of our energetic friends at the Imperial War Museum, and by persistent research into the obscure corners of 24 years back, we have, as my readers will certainly agree, got together a really remarkable collection of genuine War photographs which

have not appeared in our earlier work *World War, 1914-1918*, and in many cases have not before been printed anywhere.

**T**HIS, of course, is in addition to the scores of new photographs of war scenes in France and Flanders as they are today which we also present in our pages, the fruit of several expeditions to the War fronts. And now, less some lynx-eyed reader picks me up and declares that there is to be found in Part 4 of this work a photograph which *did* appear in my last War Book, let me say that this exception was made deliberately. The very striking picture which we have reproduced as a special duotone art plate in page 138, did appear as a small block at the bottom of a page in my earlier work. We have since then obtained detailed information about the subject, and it was decided that such an interesting photograph should be presented adequately in my new publication. Similarly, an astonishingly dramatic and genuinely unique photograph of the sinking of the German warship, the *Blücher*, at the battle of the Dogger Bank, cannot be omitted from our chapter on that historic naval dog-fight since nothing else exists. But the principle of non-repetition in my new work remains, and will be most carefully applied.

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Capt. H. FitzM. Stacke, M.C.

**I SAW THE TRAGEDY OF CORONEL**  
J. D. Stephenson, H.M.S. Glasgow

**BLOOD BATH OF LONDON SCOTS**  
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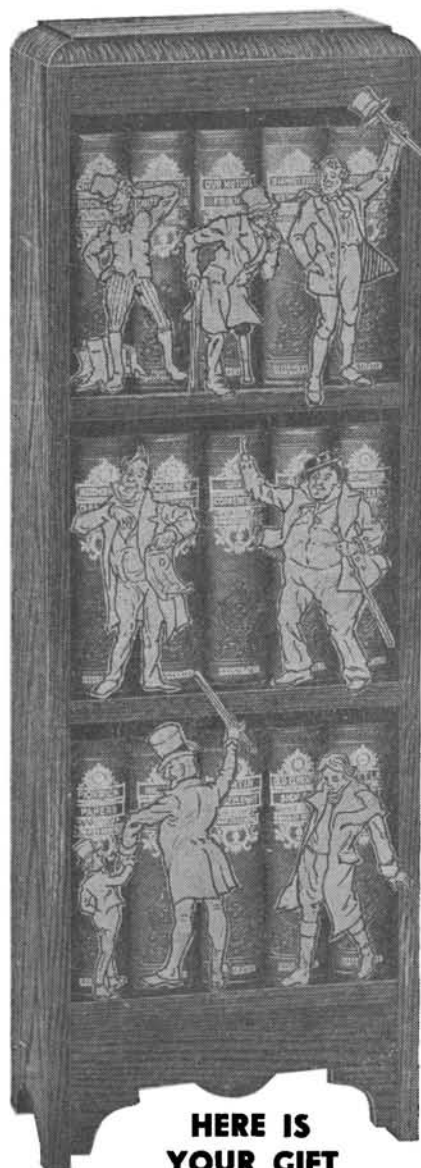
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